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HISTORY OF THE ENGLISH PEOPLE.

HISTORY

OF

HE ENGLISH PEOPLE

BY

JOHN RICHARD GREEN, M.A.

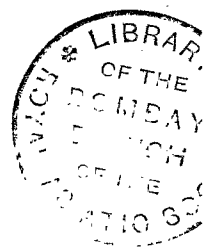
HONORARY FELLOW OF JESUS COLLEGE, OXFORD

31036

VOLUME I

Early England.	449–1071
Foreign Kings.	1071–1214
The Charter.	1204–1291
The Parliament.	1307–1461

WITH EIGHT MAPS



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I Dedicate this Book

TO TWO DEAR FRIENDS,

MY MASTERS IN THE STUDY OF ENGLISH HISTORY,

EDWARD AUGUSTUS FREEMAN,

AND

WILLIAM STUBBS.

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BOOK I.

EARLY ENGLAND.

449—1071.

AUTHORITIES FOR BOOK I.

(449—1071.)

For the conquest of Britain by the English our authorities are scant and imperfect. The only extant British account is the "Epistola" of Gildas, a work written probably about A.D. 560. The style of Gildas is diffuse and inflated, but his book is of great value in the light it throws on the state of the island at that time, and as giving at its close what is probably the native story of the conquest of Kent. This is the only part of the struggle of which we have any record from the side of the conquered. The English conquerors, on the other hand, have left jottings of their conquest of Kent, Sussex, and Wessex in the curious annals which form the opening of the compilation now known as the "English" or "Anglo-Saxon Chronicle," annals which are undoubtedly historic, though with a slight mythical intermixture. For the history of the English conquest of mid-Britain or the Eastern Coast we possess no written materials from either side; and a fragment of the Annals of Northumbria embodied in the later compilation ("Historia Britonum") which bears the name of Nennius alone throws light on the conquest of the North.

From these inadequate materials however Dr. Guest has succeeded by a wonderful combination of historical and archæological knowledge in constructing a narrative of the conquest of Southern and South-Western Britain which must serve as the starting-point for all future enquirers. This narrative, so far as it goes, has served as the basis of the account given in my text; and I can only trust that it may soon be embodied in some more accessible form than that of a series of papers in the Transactions of the Archæological Institute. In a like way, though Kemble's "Saxons in England" and Sir F. Palgrave's "History of the English Commonwealth" (if read with caution) contain much that is worth notice, our knowledge of the primitive constitution of the English people and the changes introduced into it since their settlement in Britain must be mainly drawn from the "Constitutional History" of Professor Stubbs. In my earlier book I had not the advantage of aid from this invaluable work, which was then unpublished;

in the present I do little more than follow it in all constitutional questions as far as it has at present gone.

Bæda's "Historia Ecclesiastica Gentis Anglorum," a work of which I have spoken in my text, is the primary authority for the history of the Northumbrian overlordship which followed the Conquest. It is by copious insertions from Bæda that the meagre regnal and episcopal annals of the West Saxons have been brought to the shape in which they at present appear in the part of the English Chronicle which concerns this period. The life of Wilfrid by Eddi, with those of Cuthbert by an anonymous contemporary and by Bæda himself, throw great light on the religious and intellectual condition of the North at the time of its supremacy. But with the fall of Northumbria we pass into a period of historical dearth. A few incidents of Mercian history are preserved among the meagre annals of Wessex in the English Chronicle: but for the most part we are thrown upon later writers, especially Henry of Huntingdon and William of Malmesbury, who, though authors of the twelfth century, had access to older materials which are now lost. A little may be gleaned from biographies such as that of Guthlac of Crowland; but the letters of Boniface and Alcwine, which have been edited by Jaffé in his series of "Monumenta Germanica," form the most valuable contemporary materials for this period.

From the rise of Wessex our history rests mainly on the English Chronicle. The earlier part of this work, as we have said, is a compilation, and consists of (1) Annals of the Conquest of South Britain, and (2) Short Notices of the Kings and Bishops of Wessex expanded by copious insertions from Bæda, and after the end of his work by brief additions from some northern sources. These materials may have been thrown together into their present form in Ælfred's time as a preface to the far fuller annals which begin with the reign of Æthelwulf, and which widen into a great contemporary history when they reach that of Ælfred himself. After Ælfred's day the Chronicle varies much in value. Through the reign of Eadward the Elder it is copious, and a Mercian Chronicle is imbedded in it: it then dies down into a series of scant and jejune entries, broken however with grand battle-songs, till the reign of Æthelred when its fulness returns.

Outside the Chronicle we encounter a great and valuable mass of historical material for the age of Ælfred and his successors The life of Ælfred which bears the name of Asser, puzzling as it is in some ways, is probably really Asser's work, and certainly of contemporary authority. The Latin rendering of the English Chronicle which bears the name of Æthelweard adds a little to our acquaintance with this time. The Laws, which form the base of our constitutional knowledge of this period, fall, as has been well pointed out by Mr. Freeman, into two classes. Those of Eadward, Æthelstan, Eadmund, and Eadgar, are like the earlier laws of Æthelberht and Ine, "mainly of the nature of amendments of custom." Those of Ælfred, Æthelred, Cnut, with those which bear the name of Eadward the Confessor, "aspire to the character of Codes." They are printed in Mr. Thorpe's "Ancient Laws and Institutes of England," but the extracts given by Professor Stubbs in his "Select Charters" contain all that directly bears on our

constitutional growth. A vast mass of Charters and other documents belonging to this period has been collected by Kemble in his "Codex Diplomaticus Ævi Saxonici," and some are added by Mr. Thorpe in his "Diplomatarium Anglo-Saxonicum." Dunstan's biographies have been collected and edited by Professor Stubbs in the series published by the Master of the Rolls.

In the period which follows the accession of Æthelred we are still aided by these collections of royal Laws and Charters, and the English Chronicle becomes of great importance. Its various copies indeed differ so much in tone and information from one another that they may to some extent be looked upon as distinct works, and "Florence of Worcester" is probably the translation of a valuable copy of the "Chronicle" which has disappeared. The translation however was made in the twelfth century, and it is coloured by the revival of national feeling which was characteristic of the time. Of Eadward the Confessor himself we have a contemporary biography (edited by Mr. Luard for the Master of the Rolls) which throws great light on the personal history of the King and on his relations to the house of Godwine.

The earlier Norman traditions are preserved by Dudo of St. Quentin, a verbose and confused writer, whose work was abridged and continued by William of Jumièges, a contemporary of the Conqueror. William's work in turn served as the basis of the "Roman de Rou" composed by Wace in the time of Henry the Second. The primary authority for the Conqueror himself is the "Gesta Willemi" of his chaplain and violent partizan, William of Poitiers. For the period of the invasion, in which the English authorities are meagre, we have besides these the contemporary "Carmen de Bello Hastingensi," by Guy, Bishop of Amiens, and the pictures in the Bayeux Tapestry. Orderic, a writer of the twelfth century, gossipy and confused but honest and well-informed, tells us much of the religious movement in Normandy, and is particularly valuable and detailed in his account of the period after the battle of Senlac. Among secondary authorities for the Norman Conquest, Simeon of Durham is useful for northern matters, and William of Malmesbury worthy of note for his remarkable combination of Norman and English feeling. Domesday Book is of course invaluable for the Norman settlement. The chief documents for the early history of Anjou have been collected in the "Chroniques d'Anjou" published by the Historical Society of France. Those which are authentic are little more than a few scant annals of religious houses; but light is thrown on them by the contemporary French chronicles. The "Gesta Comitum" is nothing but a compilation of the twelfth century, in which a mass of Angevin romance as to the early story of the Counts is dressed into historical shape by copious quotations from these French historians.

It is possible that fresh light may be thrown on our earlier history when historical criticism has done more than has yet been done for the materials given us by Ireland and Wales. For Welsh history the "Brut-y-Tywysogion" and the "Annales Cambriæ" are now accessible in the series published by the Master of the Rolls; the "Chronicle of Caradoc of Lancarvan" is translated by Powel; the Mabinogion, or Romantic Tales have been published by Lady Charlotte Guest;

and the Welsh Laws collected by the Record Commission. The importance of these, as embodying a customary code of very early date, will probably be better appreciated when we possess the whole of the Brehon Laws, the customary laws of Ireland, which are now being issued by the Irish Laws Commission, and to which attention has justly been drawn by Sir Henry Maine ("Early History of Institutions") as preserving Aryan usages of the remotest antiquity.

The enormous mass of materials which exists for the early history of Ireland, various as they are in critical value, may be seen in Mr. O'Curry's "Lectures on the Materials of Ancient Irish History;" and they may be conveniently studied by the general reader in the "Annals of the Four Masters," edited by Dr. O'Donovan. But this is a mere compilation (though generally a faithful one) made about the middle of the seventeenth century from earlier sources, two of which have been published in the Rolls series. One, the "Wars of the Gaedhil with the Gaill," is an account of the Danish wars which may have been written in the eleventh century; the other, the "Annals of Loch Cé," is a chronicle of Irish affairs from the end of the Danish wars to 1590. The "Chronicon Scotorum" (in the same series) extends to the year 1150, and though composed in the seventeenth century is valuable from the learning of its author, Duald Mac-Firbis. The works of Colgan are to Irish church affairs what the "Annals of the Four Masters" are to Irish civil history. They contain a vast collection of translations and transcriptions of early saints' lives, from those of Patrick downwards. Adamnan's "Life of Columba" (admirably edited by Dr. Reeves) supplies some details to the story of the Northumbrian kingdom. Among more miscellaneous works we find the "Book of Rights," a summary of the dues and rights of the several over-kings and under-kings, of much earlier date probably than the Norman invasion; and Cormac's "Glossary," attributed to the tenth century and certainly an early work, from which much may be gleaned of legal and social details, and something of the pagan religion of Ireland.

CHAPTER I.

THE ENGLISH CONQUEST OF BRITAIN.
449—577.

FOR the fatherland of the English race we must look far away from England itself. In the fifth century after the birth of Christ the one country which we know to have borne the name of Angeln or England lay within the district which is now called Sleswick, a district in the heart of the peninsula that parts the Baltic from the northern seas. Its pleasant pastures, its black-timbered homesteads, its prim little townships looking down on inlets of purple water, were then but a wild waste of heather and sand, girt along the coast with a sunless woodland broken here and there by meadows that crept down to the marshes and the sea. The dwellers in this district however seem to have been merely an outlying fragment of what was called the Engle or English folk, the bulk of whom lay probably in what is now Lower Hanover and Oldenburg. On one side of them the Saxons of Westphalia held the land from the Weser to the Rhine; on the other the Eastphalian Saxons stretched away to the Elbe. North again of the fragment of the English folk in Sleswick lay another kindred tribe, the Jutes, whose name is still preserved in their district of Jutland. Engle, Saxon, and Jute all belonged to the same Low-German branch of the Teutonic family; and at the moment when history discovers them they were being drawn together by the ties of a common blood, common speech, common

Old England.

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social and political institutions. There is little ground indeed for believing that the three tribes looked on themselves as one people, or that we can as yet apply to them, save by anticipation, the common name of Englishmen. But each of them was destined to share in the conquest of the land in which we live; and it is from the union of all of them when its conquest was complete that the English people has sprung.

The English Village.

Of the temper and life of the folk in this older England we know little. But from the glimpses that we catch of it when conquest had brought them to the shores of Britain their political and social organization must have been that of the German race to which they belonged. In their villages lay ready formed the social and political life which is round us in the England of to-day. A belt of forest or waste parted each from its fellow villages, and within this boundary or mark the "township," as the village was then called from the "tun" or rough fence and trench that served as its simple fortification, formed a complete and independent body, though linked by ties which were strengthening every day to the townships about it and the tribe of which it formed a part. Its social centre was the homestead where the ætheling or eorl, a descendant of the first English settlers in the waste, still handed down the blood and traditions of his fathers. Around this homestead or æthel, each in its little croft, stood the lowlier dwellings of freelings or ceorls, men sprung, it may be, from descendants of the earliest settler who had in various ways forfeited their claim to a share in the original homestead, or more probably from incomers into the village who had since settled round it and been admitted to a share in the land and freedom of the community. The eorl was distinguished from his fellow villagers by his wealth and his nobler blood; he was held by them in an hereditary reverence; and it was from him and his fellow æthelings that host-leaders, whether of the village or the tribe, were chosen in times of war. But this claim to precedence rested simply

on the free recognition of his fellow villagers. Within the township every freeman or ceorl was equal. It was the freeman who was the base of village society. He was the "free-necked man" whose long hair floated over a neck which had never bowed to a lord. He was the "weaponed man" who alone bore spear and sword, and who alone preserved that right of self-redress or private war which in such a state of society formed the main check upon lawless outrage.

Justice.

Among the English, as among all the races of mankind, justice had originally sprung from each man's personal action. There had been a time when every freeman was his own avenger. But even in the earliest forms of English society of which we find traces this right of self-defence was being modified and restricted by a growing sense of public justice. The "blood-wite" or compensation in money for personal wrong was the first effort of the tribe as a whole to regulate private revenge. The freeman's life and the freeman's limb had each on this system its legal price. "Eye for eye," ran the rough code, and "life for life," or for each fair damages. We see a further step towards the modern recognition of a wrong as done not to the individual man but to the people at large in another custom of early date. The price of life or limb was paid, not by the wrong-doer to the man he wronged, but by the family or house of the wrong-doer to the family or house of the wronged. Order and law were thus made to rest in each little group of people upon the blood-bond which knit its families together; every outrage was held to have been done by all who were linked in blood to the doer of it, every crime to have been done against all who were linked in blood to the sufferer from it. From this sense of the value of the family bond as a means of restraining the wrong-doer by forces which the tribe as a whole did not as yet possess sprang the first rude forms of English justice. Each kinsman was his kinsman's keeper, bound to protect him from wrong, to hinder him from wrong-doing, and to

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suffer with him and pay for him if wrong were done. So fully was this principle recognized that even if any man was charged before his fellow-tribesmen with crime his kinsfolk still remained in fact his sole judges; for it was by their solemn oath of his innocence or his guilt that he had to stand or fall.

The Land.

As the blood-bond gave its first form to English justice, so it gave their first forms to English society and English warfare. Kinsmen fought side by side in the hour of battle, and the feelings of honour and discipline which held the host together were drawn from the common duty of every man in each little group of warriors to his house. And as they fought side by side on the field, so they dwelled side by side on the soil. Harling abode by Harling, and Billing by Billing; and each "wick" or "ham" or "stead" or "tun" took its name from the kinsmen who dwelled together in it. In this way the home or "ham" of the Billings was Billingham, and the "tun" or township of the Harlings was Harlington. But in such settlements the tie of blood was widened into the larger tie of land. Land with the German race seems at a very early time to have become everywhere the accompaniment of full freedom. The freeman was strictly the free-holder, and the exercize of his full rights as a free member of the community to which he belonged became inseparable from the possession of his "holding" in it. But property had not as yet reached that stage of absolutely personal possession which the social philosophy of a later time falsely regarded as its earliest state. The woodland and pasture-land of an English village were still undivided, and every free villager had the right of turning into it his cattle or swine. The meadow-land lay in like manner open and undivided from hay-harvest to spring. It was only when grass began to grow afresh that the common meadow was fenced off into grass-fields, one for each household in the village; and when hay-harvest was over fence and division were at an end again.

The plough-land alone was permanently allotted in equal shares both of corn-land and fallow-land to the families of the freemen, though even the plough-land was subject to fresh division as the number of claimants grew greater or less.

Læt and Slave.

It was this sharing in the common land which marked off the freeman or ceorl from the unfree man or læt, the tiller of land which another owned. As the ceorl was the descendant of settlers who whether from their earlier arrival or from kinship with the original settlers of the village had been admitted to a share in its land and its corporate life, so the læt was a descendant of later comers to whom such a share was denied, or in some cases perhaps of earlier dwellers from whom the land had been wrested by force of arms. In the modern sense of freedom the læt was free enough. He had house and home of his own, his life and limb were as secure as the ceorl's—save as against his lord; it is probable from what we see in later laws that as time went on he was recognized among the three tribes as a member of the nation, summoned to the folk-moot, allowed equal right at law, and called like the full free man to the hosting. But he was unfree as regards lord and land. He had neither part nor lot in the common land of the village. The ground which he tilled he held of some free man of the tribe to whom he paid rent in labour or in kind. And this man was his lord. Whatever rights the unfree villager might gain in the general social life of his fellow villagers, he had no rights as against his lord. He could leave neither land nor lord at his will. He was bound to render due service to his lord in tillage or in fight. So long however as these services were done the land was his own. His lord could not take it from him; and he was bound to give him aid and protection in exchange for his services.

Far different from the position of the læt was that of the slave, though there is no ground for believing that the slave class was other than a small one. It was a class

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which sprang mainly from debt or crime. Famine drove men to "bend their heads in the evil days for meat;" the debtor, unable to discharge his debt, flung on the ground his freeman's sword and spear, took up the labourer's mattock, and placed his head as a slave within a master's hands. The criminal whose kinsfolk would not make up his fine became a crime-serf of the plaintiff or the king. Sometimes a father pressed by need sold children and wife into bondage. In any case the slave became part of the live stock of his master's estate, to be willed away at death with horse or ox, whose pedigree was kept as carefully as his own. His children were bondsmen like himself; even a freeman's children by a slave mother inherited the mother's taint. "Mine is the calf that is born of my cow," ran an English proverb. Slave cabins clustered round the homestead of every rich landowner; ploughman, shepherd, goatherd, swineherd, oxherd and cowherd, dairymaid, barnman, sower, hayward and woodward, were often slaves. It was not indeed slavery such as we have known in modern times, for stripes and bonds were rare: if the slave was slain it was by an angry blow, not by the lash. But his master could slay him if he would; it was but a chattel the less. The slave had no place in the justice court, no kinsmen to claim vengeance or guilt-fine for his wrong. If a stranger slew him his lord claimed the damages; if guilty of wrong-doing, "his skin paid for him" under his master's lash. If he fled he might be chased like a strayed beast, and when caught he might be flogged to death. If the wrong-doer were a woman-slave she might be burned.

The Moot.

With the public life of the village however the slave had nothing, the læt in early days little, to do. In its Moot, the common meeting of its villagers for justice and government, a slave had no place or voice, while the læt was originally represented by the lord whose land he tilled. The life, the sovereignty of the settlement resided solely in the body of the freemen whose holdings lay round the

moot-hill or the sacred tree where the community met from time to time to deal out its own justice and to make its own laws. Here new settlers were admitted to the freedom of the township, and bye-laws framed and headman and tithing-man chosen for its governance. Here ploughland and meadow-land were shared in due lot among the villagers, and field and homestead passed from man to man by the delivery of a turf cut from its soil. Here strife of farmer with farmer was settled according to the "customs" of the township as its elder men stated them, and four men were chosen to follow headman or ealdorman to hundred-court or war. It is with a reverence such as is stirred by the sight of the head-waters of some mighty river that one looks back to these village-moots of Friesland or Sleswick. It was here that England learned to be a "mother of Parliaments." It was in these tiny knots of farmers that the men from whom Englishmen were to spring learned the worth of public opinion, of public discussion, the worth of the agreement, the "common sense," the general conviction to which discussion leads, as of the laws which derive their force from being expressions of that general conviction. †A humourist of our own day has laughed at Parliaments as "talking shops," and the laugh has been echoed by some who have taken humour for argument. But talk is persuasion, and persuasion is force, the one force which can sway freemen to deeds such as those which have made England what she is. The "talk" of the village moot, the strife and judgement of men giving freely their own rede and setting it as freely aside for what they learn to be the wiser rede of other men, is the groundwork of English history. †

The Folk.

Small therefore as it might be, the township or village was thus the primary and perfect type of English life, domestic, social, and political. All that England has been since lay there. But changes of which we know nothing had long before the time at which our history opens grouped these little commonwealths together in larger

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communities, whether we name them Tribe, People, or Folk. The ties of race and kindred were no doubt drawn tighter by the needs of war. The organization of each Folk, as such, sprang in all likelihood mainly from war, from a common greed of conquest, a common need of defence. Its form at any rate was wholly military. The Folk-moot was in fact the war-host, the gathering of every freeman of the tribe in arms. The head of the Folk, a head who existed only so long as war went on, was the leader whom the host chose to command it. Its Witenagemote or meeting of wise men was the host's council of war, the gathering of those ealdormen who had brought the men of their villages to the field. The host was formed by levies from the various districts of the tribe; the larger of which probably owed their name of "hundreds" to the hundred warriors which each originally sent to it. In historic times however the regularity of such a military organization, if it ever existed, had passed away, and the quotas varied with the varying customs of each district. But men, whether many or few, were still due from each district to the host, and a cry of war at once called town-reeve and hundred-reeve with their followers to the field.

The military organization of the tribe thus gave from the first its form to the civil organization. But the peculiar shape which its civil organization assumed was determined by a principle familiar to the Germanic races and destined to exercize a vast influence on the future of mankind. This was the principle of representation. The four or ten villagers who followed the reeve of each township to the general muster of the hundred were held to represent the whole body of the township from whence they came. Their voice was its voice, their doing its doing, their pledge its pledge. The hundred-moot, a moot which was made by this gathering of the representatives of the townships that lay within its bounds, thus became at once a court of appeal from the moots of each separate village as

well as of arbitration in dispute between township and township. The judgement of graver crimes and of life or death fell to its share; while it necessarily possessed the same right of law-making for the hundred that the village-moot possessed for each separate village. And as hundred-moot stood above town-moot, so above the hundred-moot stood the Folk-moot, the general muster of the people in arms, at once war-host and highest law-court and general Parliament of the tribe. But whether in Folk-moot or hundred-moot, the principle of representation was preserved. In both the constitutional forms, the forms of deliberation and decision, were the same. In each the priests proclaimed silence, the ealdormen of higher blood spoke, groups of freemen from each township stood round, shaking their spears in assent, clashing shields in applause, settling matters in the end by loud shouts of "Aye" or "Nay."

Social Life.

Of the social or the industrial life of our fathers in this older England we know less than of their political life. But there is no ground for believing them to have been very different in these respects from the other German peoples who were soon to overwhelm the Roman world. Though their border nowhere touched the border of the Empire they were far from being utterly strange to its civilization. Roman commerce indeed reached the shores of the Baltic, and we have abundant evidence that the arts and refinement of Rome were brought into contact with these earlier Englishmen. Brooches, sword-belts, and shield-bosses which have been found in Sleswick, and which can be dated not later than the close of the third century, are clearly either of Roman make or closely modelled on Roman metal-work. The vessels of twisted glass which we know to have been in use at the tables of English and Saxon chieftains came, we can hardly doubt, from Roman glass-works. Discoveries of Roman coins in Sleswick peat-mosses afford a yet more conclusive proof of direct intercourse with the Empire. But apart from these outer influences the men of the

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three tribes were far from being mere savages. They were fierce warriors, but they were also busy fishers and tillers of the soil, as proud of their skill in handling plough and mattock or steering the rude boat with which they hunted walrus and whale as of their skill in handling sword and spear. They were hard drinkers, no doubt, as they were hard toilers, and the "ale-feast" was the centre of their social life. But coarse as the revel might seem to modern eyes, the scene within the timbered hall which rose in the midst of their villages was often Homeric in its simplicity and dignity. Queen or Eorl's wife with a train of maidens bore ale-bowl or mead-bowl round the hall from the high settle of King or Ealdorman in the midst to the mead benches ranged around its walls, while the gleeman sang the hero-songs of his race. Dress and arms showed traces of a love of art and beauty, none the less real that it was rude and incomplete. Rings, amulets, ear-rings, neck pendants, proved in their workmanship the deftness of the goldsmith's art. Cloaks were often fastened with golden buckles of curious and exquisite form, set sometimes with rough jewels and inlaid with enamel. The bronze boar-crest on the warrior's helmet, the intricate adornment of the warrior's shield, tell like the honour in which the smith was held their tale of industrial art. It is only in the English pottery, hand-made, and marked with coarse zig-zag patterns, that we find traces of utter rudeness.

Religion. The religion of these men was the same as that of the rest of the German peoples. Christianity had by this time brought about the conversion of the Roman Empire, but it had not penetrated as yet among the forests of the north. The common God of the English people was Woden, the war-god, the guardian of ways and boundaries, to whom his worshippers attributed the invention of letters, and whom every tribe held to be the first ancestor of its kings. Our own names for the days of the week still recall to us the gods whom our fathers worshipped in their

German homeland. Wednesday is Woden's-day, as Thursday is the day of Thunder, the god of air and storm and rain. Friday is Frea's-day, the deity of peace and joy and fruitfulness, whose emblems, borne aloft by dancing maidens, brought increase to every field and stall they visited. Saturday commemorates an obscure god Sætere; Tuesday the dark god, Tiw, to meet whom was death. Eostre, the god of the dawn or of the spring, lends his name to the Christian festival of the Resurrection. Behind these floated the dim shapes of an older mythology; "Wyrd," the death-goddess, whose memory lingered long in the "Weird" of northern superstition; or the Shield-maidens, the "mighty women" who, an old rime tells us, "wrought on the battle-field their toil and hurled the thrilling javelins." Nearer to the popular fancy lay deities of wood and fell or hero-gods of legend and song; Nicor, the water-sprite who survives in our nixies and "Old Nick"; Weland, the forger of weighty shields and sharp-biting swords, who found a later home in the "Weyland's smithy" of Berkshire; Egil, the hero-archer, whose legend is one with that of Cloudesly or Tell. A nature-worship of this sort lent itself ill to the purposes of a priesthood; and though a priestly class existed it seems at no time to have had much weight among Englishmen. As each freeman was his own judge and his own lawmaker, so he was his own house-priest; and English worship lay commonly in the sacrifice which the house-father offered to the gods of his hearth.

The English Temper.

It is not indeed in Woden-worship or in the worship of the older gods of flood and fell that we must look for the real religion of our fathers. The song of Beowulf, though the earliest of English poems, is as we have it now a poem of the eighth century, the work it may be of some English missionary of the days of Bæda and Boniface who gathered in the very homeland of his race the legends of its earlier prime. But the thin veil of Christianity which he has flung over it fades away as we follow the hero-legend of

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our fathers; and the secret of their moral temper, of their conception of life breathes through every line. Life was built with them not on the hope of a hereafter, but on the proud self-consciousness of noble souls. "I have this folk ruled these fifty winters," sings a hero-king as he sits death-smitten beside the dragon's mound. "Lives there no folk-king of kings about me—not any one of them—dare in the war-strife welcome my onset! Time's change and chances I have abided, held my own fairly, sought not to snare men; oath never sware I falsely against right. So for all this may I glad be at heart now, sick though I sit here, wounded with death-wounds!" In men of such a temper, strong with the strength of manhood and full of the vigour and the love of life, the sense of its shortness and of the mystery of it all woke chords of a pathetic poetry. "Soon will it be," ran the warning rime, "that sickness or sword-blade shear thy strength from thee, or the fire ring thee, or the flood whelm thee, or the sword grip thee, or arrow hit thee, or age o'ertake thee, and thine eye's brightness sink down in darkness." Strong as he might be, man struggled in vain with the doom that encompassed him, that girded his life with a thousand perils and broke it at so short a span. "To us," cries Beowulf in his last fight, "to us it shall be as our Weird betides, that Weird that is every man's lord!" But the sadness with which these Englishmen fronted the mysteries of life and death had nothing in it of the unmanly despair which bids men eat and drink for to-morrow they die. Death leaves man man and master of his fate. The thought of good fame, of manhood, is stronger than the thought of doom. "Well shall a man do when in the strife he minds but of winning longsome renown, nor for his life cares!" "Death is better than life of shame!" cries Beowulf's sword-fellow. Beowulf himself takes up his strife with the fiend, "go the weird as it will." If life is short, the more cause to work bravely till it is over. "Each man of us shall abide the end of his life-work; let

him that may work, work his doomed deeds ere death come!"

English Piracy.

The energy of these peoples found vent in a restlessness which drove them to take part in the general attack of the German race on the Empire of Rome. For busy tillers and busy fishers as Englishmen were, they were at heart fighters; and their world was a world of war. Tribe warred with tribe, and village with village; even within the township itself feuds parted household from household, and passions of hatred and vengeance were handed on from father to son. Their mood was above all a mood of fighting men, venturesome, self-reliant, proud, with a dash of hardness and cruelty in it, but ennobled by the virtues which spring from war, by personal courage and loyalty to plighted word, by a high and stern sense of manhood and the worth of man. A grim joy in hard fighting was already a characteristic of the race. War was the Englishman's "shield-play" and "sword-game"; the gleeman's verse took fresh fire as he sang of the rush of the host and the crash of its shield-line. Their arms and weapons, helmet and mailshirt, tall spear and javelin, sword and seax, the short broad dagger that hung at each warrior's girdle, gathered to them much of the legend and the art which gave colour and poetry to the life of Englishmen. Each sword had its name like a living thing. And next to their love of war came their love of the sea. Everywhere throughout Beowulf's song, as everywhere throughout the life that it pictures, we catch the salt whiff of the sea. The Englishman was as proud of his sea-craft as of his war-craft; sword in teeth he plunged into the sea to meet walrus and sea-lion; he told of his whale-chase amidst the icy waters of the north. Hardly less than his love for the sea was the love he bore to the ship that traversed it. In the fond playfulness of English verse the ship was "the wave-floater," "the foam-necked," "like a bird" as it skimmed the wave-crest, "like a swan" as its curved prow breasted the "swan-road" of the sea.

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Their passion for the sea marked out for them their part in the general movement of the German nations. While Goth and Lombard were slowly advancing over mountain and plain the boats of the Englishmen pushed faster over the sea. Bands of English rovers, outdriven by stress of fight, had long found a home there, and lived as they could by sack of vessel or coast. Chance has preserved for us in a Sleswick peat-bog one of the war-keels of these early pirates. The boat is flat-bottomed, seventy feet long and eight or nine feet wide, its sides of oak boards fastened with bark ropes and iron bolts. Fifty oars drove it over the waves with a freight of warriors whose arms, axes, swords, lances, and knives were found heaped together in its hold. Like the galleys of the Middle Ages such boats could only creep cautiously along from harbour to harbour in rough weather; but in smooth water their swiftness fitted them admirably for the piracy by which the men of these tribes were already making themselves dreaded. Its flat bottom enabled them to beach the vessel on any fitting coast; and a step on shore at once transformed the boatmen into a war-band. From the first the daring of the English race broke out in the secrecy and suddenness of the pirates' swoop, in the fierceness of their onset, in the careless glee with which they seized either sword or oar. "Foes are they," sang a Roman poet of the time, "fierce beyond other foes and cunning as they are fierce; the sea is their school of war and the storm their friend; they are sea-wolves that prey on the pillage of the world!"

Britain.

Of the three English tribes the Saxons lay nearest to the Empire, and they were naturally the first to touch the Roman world; before the close of the third century indeed their boats appeared in such force in the English Channel as to call for a special fleet to resist them. The piracy of our fathers had thus brought them to the shores of a land which, dear as it is now to Englishmen, had not as yet been trodden by English feet. This land was Britain. When the Saxon boats touched its

coast the island was the westernmost province of the Roman Empire. In the fifty-fifth year before Christ a descent of Julius Cæsar revealed it to the Roman world; and a century after Cæsar's landing the Emperor Claudius undertook its conquest. The work was swiftly carried out. Before thirty years were over the bulk of the island had passed beneath the Roman sway and the Roman frontier had been carried to the Firths of Forth and of Clyde. The work of civilization followed fast on the work of the sword. To the last indeed the distance of the island from the seat of empire left her less Romanized than any other province of the west. The bulk of the population scattered over the country seem in spite of imperial edicts to have clung to their old law as to their old language, and to have retained some traditional allegiance to their native chiefs. But Roman civilization rested mainly on city life, and in Britain as elsewhere the city was thoroughly Roman. In towns such as Lincoln or York, governed by their own municipal officers, guarded by massive walls, and linked together by a network of magnificent roads which reached from one end of the island to the other, manners, language, political life, all were of Rome.

For three hundred years the Roman sword secured order and peace without Britain and within, and with peace and order came a wide and rapid prosperity. Commerce sprang up in ports amongst which London held the first rank; agriculture flourished till Britain became one of the corn-exporting countries of the world; the mineral resources of the province were explored in the tin mines of Cornwall, the lead mines of Somerset or Northumberland, and the iron mines of the Forest of Dean. But evils which sapped the strength of the whole Empire told at last on the province of Britain. Wealth and population alike declined under a crushing system of taxation, under restrictions which fettered industry, under a despotism which crushed out all local independence. And

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with decay within came danger from without. For centuries past the Roman frontier had held back the barbaric world beyond it, the Parthian of the Euphrates, the Numidian of the African desert, the German of the Danube or the Rhine. In Britain a wall drawn from Newcastle to Carlisle bridled the British tribes, the Picts as they were called, who had been sheltered from Roman conquest by the fastnesses of the Highlands. It was this mass of savage barbarism which broke upon the Empire as it sank into decay. In its western dominions the triumph of these assailants was complete. The Franks conquered and colonized Gaul. The West-Goths conquered and colonized Spain. The Vandals founded a kingdom in Africa. The Burgundians encamped in the border-land between Italy and the Rhone. The East-Goths ruled at last in Italy itself.

Conquests of Jute and Saxon.

It was to defend Italy against the Goths that Rome in the opening of the fifth century withdrew her legions from Britain, and from that moment the province was left to struggle unaided against the Picts. Nor were these its only enemies. While marauders from Ireland, whose inhabitants then bore the name of Scots, harried the west, the boats of Saxon pirates, as we have seen, were swarming off its eastern and southern coasts. For forty years Britain held bravely out against these assailants; but civil strife broke its powers of resistance, and its rulers fell back at last on the fatal policy by which the Empire invited its doom while striving to avert it, the policy of matching barbarian against barbarian. By the usual promises of land and pay a band of warriors was drawn for this purpose from Jutland in 449 with two ealdormen, Hengest and Horsa, at their head. If by English history we mean the history of Englishmen in the land which from that time they made their own, it is with this landing of Hengest's war-band that English history begins. They landed on the shores of the Isle of Thanet at a spot known since as Ebbsfleet. No spot can be so sacred to Englishmen as the spot which first

felt the tread of English feet. There is little to catch the eye in Ebbsfleet itself, a mere lift of ground with a few grey cottages dotted over it, cut off now-a-days from the sea by a reclaimed meadow and a sea-wall. But taken as a whole the scene has a wild beauty of its own. To the right the white curve of Ramsgate cliffs looks down on the crescent of Pegwell Bay; far away to the left across grey marsh-levels where smoke-wreaths mark the site of Richborough and Sandwich the coast-line trends dimly towards Deal. Everything in the character of the spot confirms the national tradition which fixed here the landing place of our fathers; for the physical changes of the country since the fifth century have told little on its main features. At the time of Hengest's landing a broad inlet of sea parted Thanet from the mainland of Britain; and through this inlet the pirate boats would naturally come sailing with a fair wind to what was then the gravel-spit of Ebbsfleet.

The work for which the mercenaries had been hired was quickly done; and the Picts are said to have been scattered to the winds in a battle fought on the eastern coast of Britain. But danger from the Pict was hardly over when danger came from the Jutes themselves. Their fellow-pirates must have flocked from the Channel to their settlement in Thanet; the inlet between Thanet and the mainland was crossed, and the Englishmen won their first victory over the Britons in forcing their passage of the Medway at the village of Aylesford. A second defeat at the passage of the Cray drove the British forces in terror upon London; but the ground was soon won back again, and it was not till 465 that a series of petty conflicts which had gone on along the shores of Thanet made way for a decisive struggle at Wippedsfleet. Here however the overthrow was so terrible that from this moment all hope of saving Northern Kent seems to have been abandoned, and it was only on its southern shore that the Britons held their ground. Ten years later, in 475, the long contest was over, and with the fall of Lymne, whose broken walls look from the slope to

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which they cling over the great flat of Romney Marsh, the work of the first English conqueror was done.

The warriors of Hengest had been drawn from the Jutes, the smallest of the three tribes who were to blend in the English people. But the greed of plunder now told on the great tribe which stretched from the Elbe to the Rhine, and in 477 Saxon invaders were seen pushing slowly along the strip of land which lay westward of Kent between the weald and the sea. Nowhere has the physical aspect of the country more utterly changed. A vast sheet of scrub, woodland, and waste which then bore the name of the Andredsweald stretched for more than a hundred miles from the borders of Kent to the Hampshire Downs, extending northward almost to the Thames and leaving only a thin strip of coast which now bears the name of Sussex between its southern edge and the sea. This coast was guarded by a fortress which occupied the spot now called Pevensey, the future landing-place of the Norman Conqueror; and the fall of this fortress of Anderida in 491 established the kingdom of the South-Saxons. "Ælle and Cissa beset Anderida," so ran the pitiless record of the conquerors, "and slew all that were therein, nor was there afterwards one Briton left." But Hengest and Ælle's men had touched hardly more than the coast, and the true conquest of Southern Britain was reserved for a fresh band of Saxons, a tribe known as the Gewissas, who landed under Cerdic and Cynric on the shores of the Southampton Water, and pushed in 495 to the great downs or Gwent where Winchester offered so rich a prize. Nowhere was the strife fiercer than here; and it was not till 519 that a decisive victory at Charford ended the struggle for the "Gwent" and set the crown of the West-Saxons on the head of Cerdic. But the forest-belt around it checked any further advance; and only a year after Charford the Britons rallied under a new leader, Arthur, and threw back the invaders as they pressed westward through the Dorsetshire wood-

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lands in a great overthrow at Badbury or Mount Badon. The defeat was followed by a long pause in the Saxon advance from the southern coast, but while the Gewissas rested a series of victories whose history is lost was giving to men of the same Saxon tribe the coast district north of the mouth of the Thames. It is probable however that the strength of Camulodunum, the predecessor of our modern Colchester, made the progress of these assailants a slow and doubtful one; and even when its reduction enabled the East-Saxons to occupy the territory to which they have given their name of Essex a line of woodland which has left its traces in Epping and Hainault Forests checked their further advance into the island.

Conquests of the Engle.

Though seventy years had passed since the victory of Aylesford only the outskirts of Britain were won. The invaders were masters as yet but of Kent, Sussex, Hampshire, and Essex. From London to St. David's Head, from the Andredsweald to the Firth of Forth the country still remained unconquered: and there was little in the years which followed Arthur's triumph to herald that onset of the invaders which was soon to make Britain England. Till now its assailants had been drawn from two only of the three tribes whom we saw dwelling by the northern sea, from the Saxons and the Jutes. But the main work of conquest was to be done by the third, by the tribe which bore that name of Engle or Englishmen which was to absorb that of Saxon or Jute and to stamp itself on the people which sprang from the union of the conquerors as on the land that they won. The Engle had probably been settling for years along the coast of Northumbria and in the great district which was cut off from the rest of Britain by the Wash and the Fens, the later East-Anglia. But it was not till the moment we have reached that the line of defences which had hitherto held the invaders at bay was turned by their appearance in the Humber and the Trent. This great river-line led like a highway into the heart of Britain; and civil strife

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seems to have broken the strength of British resistance. But of the incidents of this final struggle we know nothing. One part of the English force marched from the Humber over the Yorkshire wolds to found what was called the kingdom of the Deirans. Under the Empire political power had centred in the district between the Humber and the Roman wall; York was the capital of Roman Britain; villas of rich landowners studded the valley of the Ouse; and the bulk of the garrison maintained in the island lay camped along its northern border. But no record tells us how Yorkshire was won, or how the Engle made themselves masters of the uplands about Lincoln. It is only by their later settlements that we follow their march into the heart of Britain. Seizing the valley of the Don and whatever breaks there were in the woodland that then filled the space between the Humber and the Trent, the Engle followed the curve of the latter river, and struck along the line of its tributary the Soar. Here round the Roman Ratæ, the predecessor of our Leicester, settled a tribe known as the Middle-English, while a small body pushed further southwards, and under the name of "South-Engle" occupied the oolitic upland that forms our present Northamptonshire. But the mass of the invaders seem to have held to the line of the Trent and to have pushed westward to its head-waters. Repton, Lichfield, and Tamworth mark the country of these western Englishmen, whose older name was soon lost in that of Mercians, or Men of the March. Their settlement was in fact a new march or borderland between conqueror and conquered; for here the impenetrable fastness of the Peak, the mass of Cannock Chase, and the broken country of Staffordshire enabled the Briton to make a fresh and desperate stand.

Conquests of West-Saxons.

It was probably this conquest of Mid-Britain by the Engle that roused the West-Saxons to a new advance. For thirty years they had rested inactive within the limits of the Gwent, but in 552 their capture of the hill-fort of Old Sarum threw open the reaches of the Wiltshire downs and

a march of King Cuthwulf on the Thames made them masters in 571 of the districts which now form Oxfordshire and Berkshire. Pushing along the upper valley of Avon to a new battle at Barbury Hill they swooped at last from their uplands on the rich prey that lay along the Severn. Gloucester, Cirencester, and Bath, cities which had leagued under their British kings to resist this onset, became in 577 the spoil of an English victory at Deorham, and the line of the great western river lay open to the arms of the conquerors. Once the West-Saxons penetrated to the borders of Chester, and Uriconium, a town beside the Wrekin which has been recently brought again to light, went up in flames. The raid ended in a crushing defeat which broke the West-Saxon strength, but a British poet in verses still left to us sings piteously the death-song of Uriconium, "the white town in the valley," the town of white stone gleaming among the green woodlands. The torch of the foe had left it a heap of blackened ruins where the singer wandered through halls he had known in happier days, the halls of its chief Kyndylan, "without fire, without light, without song," their stillness broken only by the eagle's scream, the eagle who "has swallowed fresh drink, heart's blood of Kyndylan the fair."

CHAPTER II.

THE ENGLISH KINGDOMS.

577—796.

Britain becomes England.

WITH the victory of Deorham the conquest of the bulk of Britain was complete. Eastward of a line which may be roughly drawn along the moorlands of Northumberland and Yorkshire through Derbyshire and the Forest of Arden to the Lower Severn, and thence by Mendip to the sea, the island had passed into English hands. Britain had in the main become England. And within this new England a Teutonic society was settled on the wreck of Rome. So far as the conquest had yet gone it had been complete. Not a Briton remained as subject or slave on English ground. Sullenly, inch by inch, the beaten men drew back from the land which their conquerors had won; and eastward of the border line which the English sword had drawn all was now purely English.

It is this which distinguishes the conquest of Britain from that of the other provinces of Rome. The conquest of Gaul by the Franks or that of Italy by the Lombards proved little more than a forcible settlement of the one or the other among tributary subjects who were destined in a long course of ages to absorb their conquerors. French is the tongue, not of the Frank, but of the Gaul whom he overcame; and the fair hair of the Lombard is all but unknown in Lombardy. But the English conquest of Britain up to the point which we have reached was a sheer dispossession of the people whom the English conquered. It was not

that Englishmen, fierce and cruel as at times they seem to have been, were more fierce or more cruel than other Germans who attacked the Empire; nor have we any ground for saying that they, unlike the Burgundian or the Frank, were utterly strange to the Roman civilization. Saxon mercenaries are found as well as Frank mercenaries in the pay of Rome; and the presence of Saxon vessels in the Channel for a century before the descent on Britain must have familiarized its invaders with what civilization was to be found in the Imperial provinces of the West. What really made the difference between the fate of Britain and that of the rest of the Roman world was the stubborn courage of the British themselves. In all the world-wide struggle between Rome and the German peoples no land was so stubbornly fought for or so hardly won. In Gaul no native resistance met Frank or Visigoth save from the brave peasants of Britanny and Auvergne. No popular revolt broke out against the rule of Odoacer or Theodoric in Italy. But in Britain the invader was met by a courage almost equal to his own. Instead of quartering themselves quietly, like their fellows abroad, on subjects who were glad to buy peace by obedience and tribute, the English had to make every inch of Britain their own by hard fighting.

This stubborn resistance was backed too by natural obstacles of the gravest kind. Everywhere in the Roman world the work of the conquerors was aided by the civilization of Rome. Vandal or Frank marched along Roman highways over ground cleared by the Roman axe and crossed river or ravine on the Roman bridge. It was so doubtless with the English conquerors of Britain. But though Britain had long been Roman, her distance from the seat of Empire left her less Romanized than any other province of the West. Socially the Roman civilization had made little impression on any but the townsfolk, and the material civilization of the island was yet more backward than its social. Its natural defences threw obstacles

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in its invaders' way. In the forest belts which stretched over vast spaces of country they found barriers which in all cases checked their advance and in some cases finally stopped it. The Kentishmen and the South Saxons were brought utterly to a standstill by the Andredsweald. The East Saxons could never pierce the woods of their western border. The Fens proved impassable to the Northfolk and the Southfolk of East-Anglia. It was only after a long and terrible struggle that the West-Saxons could hew their way through the forests which sheltered the "Gwent" of the southern coast. Their attempt to break out of the circle of woodland which girt in the downs was in fact fruitless for thirty years; and in the height of their later power they were thrown back from the forests of Cheshire.

Withdrawal of the Britons.

It is only by realizing in this way the physical as well as the moral circumstances of Britain that we can understand the character of its earlier conquest. Field by field, town by town, forest by forest, the land was won. And as each bit of ground was torn away by the stranger, the Briton sullenly withdrew from it only to turn doggedly and fight for the next. There is no need to believe that the clearing of the land meant so impossible a thing as the general slaughter of the men who held it. Slaughter there was, no doubt, on the battle-field or in towns like Anderida whose resistance woke wrath in their besiegers. But for the most part the Britons were not slaughtered; they were defeated and drew back. Such a withdrawal was only made possible by the slowness of the conquest. For it is not only the stoutness of its defence which distinguishes the conquest of Britain from that of the other provinces of the Empire, but the weakness of attack. As the resistance of the Britons was greater than that of the other provincials of Rome so the forces of their assailants were less. Attack by sea was less easy than attack by land, and the numbers who were brought across by the boats of Hengest or Cerdic cannot have rivalled those which followed Theodoric or Chlodewig across the Alps or the

Rhine. Landing in small parties, and but gradually reinforced by after-comers, the English invaders could only slowly and fitfully push the Britons back. The absence of any joint action among the assailants told in the same way. Though all spoke the same language and used the same laws, they had no such bond of political union as the Franks; and though all were bent on winning the same land, each band and each leader preferred their own separate course of action to any collective enterprize.

The English settlement.

Under such conditions the overrunning of Britain could not fail to be a very different matter from the rapid and easy overrunning of such countries as Gaul. How slow the work of English conquest was may be seen from the fact that it took nearly thirty years to win Kent alone and sixty to complete the conquest of Southern Britain, and that the conquest of the bulk of the island was only wrought out after two centuries of bitter warfare. But it was just through the length of the struggle that of all the German conquests this proved the most thorough and complete. So far as the English sword in these earlier days had reached, Britain had become England, a land, that is, not of Britons but of Englishmen. Even if a few of the vanquished people lingered as slaves round the homesteads of their English conquerors, or a few of their household words mingled with the English tongue, doubtful exceptions such as these leave the main facts untouched. The keynote of the conquest was firmly struck. When the English invasion was stayed for a while by the civil wars of the invaders, the Briton had disappeared from the greater part of the land which had been his own; and the tongue, the religion, the laws of his English conquerors reigned without a break from Essex to Staffordshire and from the British Channel to the Firth of Forth.

For the driving out of the Briton was, as we have seen, but a prelude to the settlement of his conqueror. What strikes us at once in the new England is this, that it was the one purely German nation that rose upon the wreck of

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Rome. In other lands, in Spain or Gaul or Italy, though they were equally conquered by German peoples, religion, social life, administrative order, still remained Roman. Britain was almost the only province of the Empire where Rome died into a vague tradition of the past. The whole organization of government and society disappeared with the people who used it. Roman roads indeed still led to desolate cities. Roman camps still crowned hill and down. The old divisions of the land remained to furnish bounds of field and farm for the new settlers. The Roman church, the Roman country-house, was left standing, though reft of priest and lord. But Rome was gone. The mosaics, the coins which we dig up in our fields are no relics of our English fathers, but of a world which our fathers' sword swept utterly away. Its law, its literature, its manners, its faith, went with it. Nothing was a stronger proof of the completeness of this destruction of all Roman life than the religious change which passed over the land. Alone among the German assailants of Rome the English stood aloof from the faith of the Empire they helped to overthrow. The new England was a heathen country. Homestead and boundary, the very days of the week, bore the names of new gods who displaced Christ.

As we stand amidst the ruins of town or country-house which recall to us the wealth and culture of Roman Britain, it is hard to believe that a conquest which left them heaps of crumbling stones was other than a curse to the land over which it passed. But if the new England which sprang from the wreck of Britain seemed for the moment a waste from which the arts, the letters, the refinement of the world had fled hopelessly away, it contained within itself germs of a nobler life than that which had been destroyed. The base of Roman society here as everywhere throughout the Roman world was the slave, the peasant who had been crushed by tyranny, political and social, into serfdom. The base of the new English society was the

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freeman whom we have seen tilling, judging, or fighting for himself by the Northern Sea. However roughly he dealt with the material civilization of Britain while the struggle went on, it was impossible that such a man could be a mere destroyer. War in fact was no sooner over than the warrior settled down into the farmer, and the home of the ceorl rose beside the heap of goblin-haunted stones that marked the site of the villa he had burned. The settlement of the English in the conquered land was nothing less than an absolute transfer of English society in its completest form to the soil of Britain. The slowness of their advance, the small numbers of each separate band in its descent upon the coast, made it possible for the invaders to bring with them, or to call to them when their work was done, the wives and children, the læt and slave, even the cattle they had left behind them. The first wave of conquest was but the prelude to the gradual migration of a whole people. It was England which settled down on British soil, England with its own language, its own laws, its complete social fabric, its system of village life and village culture, its township and its hundred, its principle of kinship, its principle of representation. It was not as mere pirates or stray war-bands, but as peoples already made, and fitted by a common temper and common customs to draw together into our English nation in the days to come, that our fathers left their German home-land for the land in which we live. Their social and political organization remained radically unchanged. In each of the little kingdoms which rose on the wreck of Britain the host camped on the land it had won, and the divisions of the host supplied here as in its older home the rough groundwork of local distribution. The land occupied by the hundred warriors who formed the unit of military organization became perhaps the local hundred; but it is needless to attach any notion of precise uniformity, either in the number of settlers or in the area of their settlement, to such a process as this, any

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more than to the army organization which the process of distribution reflected. From the large amount of public land which we find existing afterwards it has been conjectured with some probability that the number of settlers was far too small to occupy the whole of the country at their disposal, and this unoccupied ground became "folk-land," the common property of the tribe as at a later time of the nation. What ground was actually occupied may have been assigned to each group and each family in the group by lot, and Eorl and Ceorl gathered round them their læt and slave as in their homeland by the Rhine or the Elbe. And with the English people passed to the shores of Britain all that was to make Englishmen what they are. For distant and dim as their life in that older England may have seemed to us, the whole after-life of Englishmen was there. In its village-moots lay our Parliament; in the gleeman of its village-feasts our Chaucer and our Shakspere; in the pirate-bark stealing from creek to creek our Drakes and our Nelsons. Even the national temper was fully formed. Civilization, letters, science, religion itself, have done little to change the inner mood of Englishmen. That love of venture and of toil, of the sea and the fight, that trust in manhood and the might of man, that silent awe of the mysteries of life and death which lay deep in English souls then as now, passed with Englishmen to the land which Englishmen had won.

The King.

But though English society passed thus in its completeness to the soil of Britain its primitive organization was affected in more ways than one by the transfer. In the first place conquest begat the King. It seems probable that the English had hitherto known nothing of Kings in their own fatherland, where each tribe was satisfied in peace time with the customary government of village-reeve and hundred-reeve and Ealdorman, while it gathered at fighting times under war leaders whom it chose for each campaign. But in the long and obstinate warfare which they waged against the Britons it was needful to find a common leader

whom the various tribes engaged in conquests such as those of Wessex or Mercia might follow; and the ceaseless character of a struggle which left few intervals of rest or peace raised these leaders into a higher position than that of temporary chieftains. It was no doubt from this cause that we find Hengest and his son Æsc raised to the kingdom in Kent, or Ælle in Sussex, or Cerdic and Cynric among the West Saxons. The association of son with father in this new kingship marked the hereditary character which distinguished it from the temporary office of an Ealdorman. The change was undoubtedly a great one, but it was less than the modern conception of kingship would lead us to imagine. Hereditary as the succession was within a single house, each successive King was still the free choice of his people, and for centuries to come it was held within a people's right to pass over a claimant too weak or too wicked for the throne. In war indeed the King was supreme. But in peace his power was narrowly bounded by the customs of his people and the rede of his wise men. Justice was not as yet the King's justice, it was the justice of village and hundred and folk in town-moot and hundred-moot and folk-moot. It was only with the assent of the wise men that the King could make laws and declare war and assign public lands and name public officers. Above all, should his will be to break through the free customs of his people, he was without the means of putting his will into action, for the one force he could call on was the host, and the host was the people itself in arms.

The Thegn.

With the new English King rose a new order of English nobles. The social distinction of the Eorl was founded on the peculiar purity of his blood, on his long descent from the original settler around whom township and thorpe grew up. A new distinction was now to be found in service done to the King. From the earliest times of German society it had been the wont of young men greedy of honour or seeking training in arms to bind themselves as "comrades" to king or chief. The leader

whom they chose gave them horses, arms, a seat in his mead hall, and gifts from his hoard. The "comrade" on the other hand—the gesith or thegn, as he was called—bound himself to follow and fight for his lord. The principle of personal dependence as distinguished from the warrior's general duty to the folk at large was embodied in the thegn. "Chieftains fight for victory," says Tacitus; "comrades for their chieftain." When one of Beowulf's "comrades" saw his lord hard bested "he minded him of the homestead he had given him, of the folk right he gave him as his father had it; nor might he hold back then." Snatching up sword and shield he called on his fellow-thegns to follow him to the fight. "I mind me of the day," he cried, "when we drank the mead, the day we gave pledge to our lord in the beer hall as he gave us these rings, our pledge that we would pay him back our war-gear, our helms and our hard swords, if need befel him. Unmeet is it, methinks, that we should bear back our shields to our home unless we guard our lord's life." The larger the band of such "comrades," the more power and repute it gave their lord. It was from among the chiefs whose war-band was strongest that the leaders of the host were commonly chosen; and as these leaders grew into kings, the number of their thegns naturally increased. The rank of the "comrades" too rose with the rise of their lord. The king's thegns were his body-guard, the one force ever ready to carry out his will. They were his nearest and most constant counsellors. As the gathering of petty tribes into larger kingdoms swelled the number of eorls in each realm and in a corresponding degree diminished their social importance, it raised in equal measure the rank of the king's thegns. A post among them was soon coveted and won by the greatest and noblest in the land. Their service was rewarded by exemption from the general jurisdiction of hundred-court or shire-court, for it was part of a thegn's meed for his service that he should be judged only by the lord he served. Other meed was found in grants of public land which made

them a local nobility, no longer bound to actual service in the king's household or the king's war-band, but still bound to him by personal ties of allegiance far closer than those which bound an eorl to the chosen war-leader of the tribe. In a word, thegnhood contained within itself the germ of that later feudalism which was to battle so fiercely with the Teutonic freedom out of which it grew.

The Bernicians.

But the strife between the conquering tribes which at once followed on their conquest of Britain was to bring about changes even more momentous in the developement of the English people. While Jute and Saxon and Engle were making themselves masters of central and southern Britain, the English who had landed on its northernmost shores had been slowly winning for themselves the coast district between the Forth and the Tyne which bore the name of Bernicia. Their progress seems to have been small till they were gathered into a kingdom in 547 by Ida the "Flame-bearer" who found a site for his King's town on the impregnable rock of Bamborough; nor was it till the reign of his fourth son Æthelric that they gained full mastery over the Britons along their western border. But once masters of the Britons the Bernician Englishmen turned to conquer their English neighbours to the south, the men of Deira, whose first King Ælla was now sinking to the grave. The struggle filled the foreign markets with English slaves, and one of the most memorable stories in our history shows us a group of such captives as they stood in the market-place of Rome, it may be in the great Forum of Trajan which still in its decay recalled the glories of the Imperial City. Their white bodies, their fair faces, their golden hair was noted by a deacon who passed by. "From what country do these slaves come?" Gregory asked the trader who brought them. The slave-dealer answered "They are English," or as the word ran in the Latin form it would bear at Rome "they are Angles." The deacon's pity veiled itself in poetic humour. "Not Angles but Angels" he said, "with faces so angel-

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like! From what country come they?" "They come" said the merchant "from Deira." "*De irâ!*" was the untranslatable word-play of the vivacious Roman—"aye, plucked from God's ire and called to Christ's mercy! And what is the name of their king?" They told him "Ælla," and Gregory seized on the word as of good omen. "Alleluia shall be sung in Ælla's land," he said, and passed on, musing how the angel-faces should be brought to sing it.

While Gregory was thus playing with Ælla's name the old King passed away, and with his death in 589 the resistance of his kingdom seems to have ceased. His house fled over the western border to find refuge among the Welsh, and Æthelric of Bernicia entered Deira in triumph. A new age of our history opens in this submission of one English people to another. When the two kingdoms were united under a common lord the period of national formation began. If a new England sprang out of the mass of English states which covered Britain after its conquest, we owe it to the gradual submission of the smaller peoples to the supremacy of a common political head. The difference in power between state and state which inevitably led to this process of union was due to the character which the conquest of Britain was now assuming. Up to this time all the kingdoms which had been established by the invaders had stood in the main on a footing of equality. All had taken an independent share in the work of conquest. Though the oneness of a common blood and a common speech was recognized by all we find no traces of any common action or common rule. Even in the two groups of kingdoms, the five English and the five Saxon kingdoms, which occupied Britain south of the Humber, the relations of each member of the group to its fellows seem to have been merely local. It was only locally that East and West and South and North English were grouped round the Middle English of Leicester, or East and West and South and North

Saxons round the Middle Saxons about London. In neither instance do we find any real trace of a confederacy, or of the rule of one member of the group over the others; while north of the Humber the feeling between the Englishmen of Yorkshire and the Englishmen who had settled towards the Firth of Forth was one of hostility rather than of friendship. But this age of isolation, of equality, of independence, had now come to an end. The progress of the conquest had drawn a sharp line between the kingdoms of the conquerors. The work of half of them was done. In the south of the island not only Kent but Sussex, Essex, and Middlesex were surrounded by English territory, and hindered by that single fact from all further growth. The same fate had befallen the East Engle, the South Engle, the Middle and the North Engle. The West Saxons on the other hand and the West Engle, or Mercians, still remained free to conquer and expand on the south of the Humber, as the Englishmen of Deira and Bernicia remained free to the north of that river. It was plain therefore that from this moment the growth of these powers would throw their fellow kingdoms into the background, and that with an ever-growing inequality of strength must come a new arrangement of political forces. The greater kingdoms would in the end be drawn to subject and absorb the lesser ones, and to the war between Englishman and Briton would be added a struggle between Englishman and Englishman.

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Kent.

It was through this struggle and the establishment of a lordship on the part of the stronger and growing states over their weaker and stationary fellows that the English kingdoms were to make their first step towards union in a single England. Such an overlordship seemed destined but a few years before to fall to the lot of Wessex. The victories of Ceawlin and Cuthwulf left it the largest of the English kingdoms. None of its fellow states seemed able to hold their own against a power which stretched

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from the Chilterns to the Severn and from the Channel to the Ouse. But after its defeat in the march upon Chester Wessex suddenly broke down into a chaos of warring tribes; and her place was taken by two powers whose rise to greatness was as sudden as her fall. The first of these was Kent. The Kentish King Æthelberht found himself hemmed in on every side by English territory; and since conquest over Britons was denied him he sought a new sphere of action in setting his kingdom at the head of the conquerors of the south. The break up of Wessex no doubt aided his attempt; but we know little of the causes or events which brought about his success. We know only that the supremacy of the Kentish King was owned at last by the English peoples of the east and centre of Britain. But it was not by her political action that Kent was in the end to further the creation of a single England; for the lordship which Æthelberht built up was doomed to fall for ever with his death, and yet his death left Kent the centre of a national union far wider as it was far more enduring than the petty lordship which stretched over Eastern Britain. Years had passed by since Gregory pitied the English slaves in the market-place of Rome. As Bishop of the Imperial City he at last found himself in a position to carry out his dream of winning Britain to the faith, and an opening was given him by Æthelberht's marriage with Bercta, a daughter of the Frankish King Charibert of Paris. Bercta like her Frankish kindred was a Christian; a Christian Bishop accompanied her from Gaul; and a ruined Christian church, the church of St. Martin beside the royal city of Canterbury, was given them for their worship. The King himself remained true to the gods of his fathers; but his marriage no doubt encouraged Gregory to send a Roman abbot, Augustine, at the head of a band of monks to preach the Gospel to the English people. The missionaries landed in 597 in the Isle of Thanet, at the spot where Hengest had landed more than a century before; and Æthelberht received

them sitting in the open air on the chalk-down above Minster where the eye now-a-days catches miles away over the marshes the dim tower of Canterbury. The King listened patiently to the long sermon of Augustine as the interpreters the abbot had brought with him from Gaul rendered it in the English tongue. "Your words are fair," Æthelberht replied at last with English good sense, "but they are new and of doubtful meaning." For himself, he said, he refused to forsake the gods of his fathers, but with the usual religious tolerance of the German race he promised shelter and protection to the strangers. The band of monks entered Canterbury bearing before them a silver cross with a picture of Christ, and singing in concert the strains of the litany of their Church. "Turn from this city, O Lord," they sang "Thine anger and wrath, and turn it from Thy holy house, for we have sinned." And then in strange contrast came the jubilant cry of the older Hebrew worship, the cry which Gregory had wrested in prophetic earnestness from the name of the Yorkshire king in the Roman market-place, "Alleluia!"

Christian England.

It was thus that the spot which witnessed the landing of Hengest became yet better known as the landing-place of Augustine. But the second landing at Ebbsfleet was in no small measure a reversal and undoing of the first. "Strangers from Rome" was the title with which the missionaries first fronted the English king. The march of the monks as they chaunted their solemn litany was in one sense a return of the Roman legions who withdrew at the trumpet-call of Alaric. It was to the tongue and the thought not of Gregory only but of the men whom his Jutish fathers had slaughtered or driven out that Æthelberht listened in the preaching of Augustine. Canterbury, the earliest royal city of German England, became a centre of Latin influence. The Roman tongue became again one of the tongues of Britain, the language of its worship, its correspondence, its literature. But more than

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the tongue of Rome returned with Augustine. Practically his landing renewed that union with the Western world which the landing of Hengest had destroyed. The new England was admitted into the older commonwealth of nations. The civilization, art, letters, which had fled before the sword of the English conquerors returned with the Christian faith. The great fabric of the Roman law indeed never took root in England, but it is impossible not to recognize the result of the influence of the Roman missionaries in the fact that codes of the customary English law began to be put in writing soon after their arrival.

Æthelfrith.

A year passed before Æthelberht yielded to the preaching of Augustine. But from the moment of his conversion the new faith advanced rapidly and the Kentish men crowded to baptism in the train of their king. The new religion was carried beyond the bounds of Kent by the supremacy which Æthelberht wielded over the neighbouring kingdoms. Sæberht, King of the East-Saxons, received a bishop sent from Kent, and suffered him to build up again a Christian church in what was now his subject city of London, while the East-Anglian King Rædwald resolved to serve Christ and the older gods together. But while Æthelberht was thus furnishing a future centre of spiritual unity in Canterbury, the see to which Augustine was consecrated, the growth of Northumbria was pointing it out as the coming political centre of the new England. In 593, four years before the landing of the missionaries in Kent, Æthelric was succeeded by his son *Æthelfrith*, and the new king took up the work of conquest with a vigour greater than had yet been shown by any English leader. For ten years he waged war with the Britons of Strathclyde, a tract which stretched along his western border from Dumbarton to Carlisle. The contest ended in a great battle at Dægsa's Stan, perhaps Dawston in Liddesdale; and Æthelfrith turned to deliver a yet more crushing blow on his southern border. British kingdoms still

stretched from Clyde-mouth to the mouth of Severn; and had their line remained unbroken the British resistance might yet have withstood the English advance. It was with a sound political instinct therefore that Æthelfrith marched in 607 upon Chester, the point where the kingdom of Cumbria, a kingdom which stretched from the Lune to the Dee, linked itself to the British states of what we now call Wales. Hard by the city two thousand monks were gathered in one of those vast religious settlements which were characteristic of Celtic Christianity, and after a three days' fast a crowd of these ascetics followed the British army to the field. Æthelfrith watched the wild gestures of the monks as they stood apart from the host with arms outstretched in prayer, and bade his men slay them in the coming fight. "Bear they arms or no," said the King, "they war against us when they cry against us to their God," and in the surprise and rout which followed the monks were the first to fall.

With the battle of Chester Britain, as a single political body, ceased to exist. By their victory at Deorham the West-Saxons had cut off the Britons of Dorset, Somerset, Devon, and Cornwall from the general body of their race. By Æthelfrith's victory at Chester and the reduction of southern Lancashire which followed it what remained of Britain was broken into two several parts. From this time therefore the character of the English conquest of Britain changes. The warfare of Briton and Englishman died down into a warfare of separate English kingdoms against separate British kingdoms, of Northumbria against Cumbria and Strathclyde, of Mercia against modern Wales, of Wessex against the tract of British country from Mendip to the Land's End. But great as was the importance of the battle of Chester to the fortunes of Britain, it was of still greater importance to the fortunes of England itself. The drift towards national unity had already begun, but from the moment of Æthelfrith's victory this drift became the main current of our history.

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Masters of the larger and richer part of the land, its conquerors were no longer drawn greedily westward by the hope of plunder; while the severance of the British kingdoms took from their enemies the pressure of a common danger. The conquests of Æthelfrith left him without a rival in military power, and he turned from victories over the Welsh, as their English foes called the Britons, to the building up of a lordship over his own countrymen.

Eadwine.

The power of Æthelberht seems to have declined with old age, and though the Essex men still owned his supremacy, the English tribes of Mid-Britain shook it off. So strong however had the instinct of union now become, that we hear nothing of any return to their old isolation. Mercians and Southumbrians, Middle-English and South-English now owned the lordship of the East-English King Rædwald. The shelter given by Rædwald to Ælla's son Eadwine served as a pretext for a Northumbrian attack. Fortune however deserted Æthelfrith, and a snatch of northern song still tells of the day when the river Idle by Retford saw his defeat and fall. But the greatness of Northumbria survived its King. In 617 Eadwine was welcomed back by his own men of Deira; and his conquest of Bernicia maintained that union of the two realms which the Bernician conquest of Deira had first brought about. The greatness of Northumbria now reached its height. Within his own dominions, Eadwine displayed a genius for civil government which shews how utterly the mere age of conquest had passed away. With him began the English proverb so often applied to after kings: "A woman with her babe might walk scatheless from sea to sea in Eadwine's day." Peaceful communication revived along the deserted highways; the springs by the roadside were marked with stakes, and a cup of brass set beside each for the traveller's refreshment. Some faint traditions of the Roman past may have flung their glory round this new "Empire of the English;" a royal standard of purple and gold floated before Eadwine as he rode

through the villages; a feather tuft attached to a spear, the Roman tufa, preceded him as he walked through the streets. The Northumbrian king became in fact supreme over Britain as no king of English blood had been before. Northward his frontier reached to the Firth of Forth, and here, if we trust tradition, Eadwine founded a city which bore his name, Edinburgh, Eadwine's burgh. To the west his arms crushed the long resistance of Elmet, the district about Leeds; he was master of Chester, and the fleet he equipped there subdued the isles of Anglesea and Man. South of the Humber he was owned as overlord by the five English states of Mid-Britain. The West-Saxons remained awhile independent. But revolt and slaughter had fatally broken their power when Eadwine attacked them. A story preserved by Bæda tells something of the fierceness of the struggle which ended in the subjection of the south to the overlordship of Northumbria. In an Easter-court which he held in his royal city by the river Derwent, Eadwine gave audience to Eumer, an envoy of Wessex, who brought a message from its king. In the midst of the conference Eumer started to his feet, drew a dagger from his robe, and rushed on the Northumbrian sovereign. Lilla, one of the King's war-band, threw himself between Eadwine and his assassin; but so furious was the stroke that even through Lilla's body the dagger still reached its aim. The king however recovered from his wound to march on the West-Saxons; he slew or subdued all who had conspired against him, and returned victorious to his own country.

Conversion of Northumbria.

Kent had bound itself to him by giving him its King's daughter as a wife, a step which probably marked political subordination; and with the Kentish queen had come Paulinus, one of Augustine's followers, whose tall stooping form, slender aquiline nose, and black hair falling round a thin worn face, were long remembered in the North. Moved by his queen's prayers Eadwine promised to become Christian if he returned successful from Wessex; and the

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wise men of Northumbria gathered to deliberate on the new faith to which he bowed. To finer minds its charm lay then as now in the light it threw on the darkness which encompassed men's lives, the darkness of the future as of the past. "So seems the life of man, O king," burst forth an aged Ealdorman "as a sparrow's flight through the hall when a man is sitting at meat in winter-tide with the warm fire lighted on the hearth but the chill rain-storm without. The sparrow flies in at one door and tarries for a moment in the light and heat of the hearth-fire, and then flying forth from the other vanishes into the wintry darkness whence it came. So tarries for a moment the life of man in our sight, but what is before it, what after it, we know not. If this new teaching tell us aught certainly of these, let us follow it." Coarser argument told on the crowd. "None of your people, Eadwine, have worshipped the gods more busily than I," said Coifi the priest, "yet there are many more favoured and more fortunate. Were these gods good for anything they would help their worshippers." Then leaping on horseback, he hurled his spear into the sacred temple at Godmanham, and with the rest of the Witan embraced the religion of the king.

Penda.

But the faith of Woden and Thunder was not to fall without a struggle. Even in Kent a reaction against the new creed began with the death of Æthelberht. The young Kings of the East-Saxons burst into the church where the Bishop of London was administering the Eucharist to the people, crying "Give us that white bread you gave to our father Saba," and on the bishop's refusal drove him from their realm. This earlier tide of reaction was checked by Eadwine's conversion; but Mercia, which had as yet owned the supremacy of Northumbria, sprang into a sudden greatness as the champion of the heathen gods. Its King, Penda, saw in the rally of the old religion a chance of winning back his people's freedom and giving it the lead among the tribes about it. Originally mere settlers along the Upper Trent, the position of

the Mercians on the Welsh border invited them to widen their possessions by conquest while the rest of their Anglian neighbours were shut off from any chance of expansion. Their fights along the frontier too kept their warlike energy at its height. Penda must have already asserted his superiority over the four other English tribes of Mid-Britain before he could have ventured to attack Wessex and tear from it in 628 the country of the Hwiccas and Magesætas on the Severn. Even with this accession of strength however he was still no match for Northumbria. But the war of the English people with the Britons seems at this moment to have died down for a season, and the Mercian ruler boldly broke through the barrier which had parted the two races till now by allying himself with a Welsh King, Cadwallon, for a joint attack on Eadwine. The armies met in 633 at a place called Hæthfeld, and in the fight which followed Eadwine was defeated and slain.

Oswald.

Bernicia seized on the fall of Eadwine to recall the line of Æthelfrith to its throne; and after a year of anarchy his second son, Oswald, became its King. The Welsh had remained encamped in the heart of the north, and Oswald's first fight was with Cadwallon. A small Northumbrian force gathered in 635 near the Roman Wall, and pledged itself at the new King's bidding to become Christian if it conquered in the fight. Cadwallon fell fighting on the "Heaven's Field," as after times called the field of battle; the submission of Deira to the conqueror restored the kingdom of Northumbria; and for nine years the power of Oswald equalled that of Eadwine. It was not the Church of Paulinus which nerved Oswald to this struggle for the Cross, or which carried out in Bernicia the work of conversion which his victory began. Paulinus fled from Northumbria at Eadwine's fall; and the Roman Church, though established in Kent, did little in contending elsewhere against the heathen reaction. Its place in the conversion of northern England was taken by missionaries from Ireland. To understand the true

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meaning of this change we must remember how greatly the Christian Church in the west had been affected by the German invasion. Before the landing of the English in Britain the Christian Church stretched in an unbroken line across Western Europe to the furthest coasts of Ireland. The conquest of Britain by the pagan English thrust a wedge of heathendom into the heart of this great communion and broke it into two unequal parts. On one side lay Italy, Spain, and Gaul, whose churches owned obedience to and remained in direct contact with the See of Rome, on the other, practically cut off from the general body of Christendom, lay the Church of Ireland. But the condition of the two portions of Western Christendom was very different. While the vigour of Christianity in Italy and Gaul and Spain was exhausted in a bare struggle for life, Ireland, which remained unscourged by invaders, drew from its conversion an energy such as it has never known since. Christianity was received there with a burst of popular enthusiasm, and letters and arts sprang up rapidly in its train. The science and Biblical knowledge which fled from the Continent took refuge in its schools. The new Christian life soon beat too strongly to brook confinement within the bounds of Ireland itself. Patrick, the first missionary of the island, had not been half a century dead when Irish Christianity flung itself with a fiery zeal into battle with the mass of heathenism which was rolling in upon the Christian world. Irish missionaries laboured among the Picts of the Highlands and among the Frisians of the northern seas. An Irish missionary, Columban, founded monasteries in Burgundy and the Apennines. The canton of St. Gall still commemorates in its name another Irish missionary before whom the spirits of flood and fell fled wailing over the waters of the Lake of Constance. For a time it seemed as if the course of the world's history was to be changed, as if the older Celtic race that Roman and German had swept before them had turned to the moral

conquest of their conquerors, as if Celtic and not Latin Christianity was to mould the destinies of the Churches of the West.

Aidan.

On a low island of barren gneiss-rock off the west coast of Scotland an Irish refugee, Columba, had raised the famous mission-station of Iona. It was within its walls that Oswald in youth found refuge, and on his accession to the throne of Northumbria he called for missionaries from among its monks. The first preacher sent in answer to his call obtained little success. He declared on his return that among a people so stubborn and barbarous as the Northumbrian folk success was impossible. "Was it their stubbornness or your severity?" asked Aidan, a brother sitting by; "did you forget God's word to give them the milk first and then the meat?" All eyes turned on the speaker as fittest to undertake the abandoned mission, and Aidan sailing at their bidding fixed his bishop's see in the island-peninsula of Lindisfarne. Thence, from a monastery which gave to the spot its after name of Holy Island, preachers poured forth over the heathen realms. Aidan himself wandered on foot, preaching among the peasants of Yorkshire and Northumbria. In his own court the King acted as interpreter to the Irish missionaries in their efforts to convert his thegns. A new conception of kingship indeed began to blend itself with that of the warlike glory of Æthelfrith or the wise administration of Eadwine, and the moral power which was to reach its height in Ælfred first dawns in the story of Oswald. For after-times the memory of Oswald's greatness was lost in the memory of his piety. "By reason of his constant habit of praying or giving thanks to the Lord he was wont wherever he sat to hold his hands upturned on his knees." As he feasted with Bishop Aidan by his side, the thegn, or noble of his war-band, whom he had set to give alms to the poor at his gate told him of a multitude that still waited fasting without. The King at once bade the untasted meat before him be carried to the poor, and his silver dish be parted

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piecemeal among them. Aidan seized the royal hand and blessed it. "May this hand," he cried, "never grow old."

Oswald's lordship stretched as widely over Britain as that of his predecessor Eadwine. In him even more than in Eadwine men saw some faint likeness of the older Emperors; once indeed a writer from the land of the Picts calls Oswald "Emperor of the whole of Britain." His power was bent to carry forward the conversion of all England, but prisoned as it was to the central districts of the country heathendom fought desperately for life. Penda was still its rallying-point. His long reign was one continuous battle with the new religion; but it was a battle rather with the supremacy of Christian Northumbria than with the supremacy of the Cross. East-Anglia became at last the field of contest between the two powers; and in 642 Oswald marched to deliver it from the Mercian rule. But his doom was the doom of Eadwine, and in a battle called the battle of the Maserfeld he was overthrown and slain For a few years after his victory at the Maserfeld, Penda stood supreme in Britain. Heathenism triumphed with him. If Wessex did not own his overlordship as it had owned that of Oswald, its King threw off the Christian faith which he had embraced but a few years back at the preaching of Birinus. Even Deira seems to have owned Penda's sway. Bernicia alone, though distracted by civil war between rival claimants for its throne, refused to yield. Year by year the Mercian King carried his ravages over the north; once he reached even the royal city, the impregnable rock-fortress of Bamborough. Despairing of success in an assault, he pulled down the cottages around, and piling their wood against its walls fired the mass in a fair wind that drove the flames on the town. "See, Lord, what ill Penda is doing," cried Aidan from his hermit cell in the islet of Farne, as he saw the smoke drifting over the city, and a change of wind—so ran the legend of Northumbria's agony—drove back the flames on those who kindled them. But burned and

harried as it was, Bernicia still fought for the Cross. Oswiu, a third son of Æthelfrith, held his ground stoutly against Penda's inroads till their cessation enabled him to build up again the old Northumbrian kingdom by a march upon Deira. The union of the two realms was never henceforth to be dissolved; and its influence was at once seen in the renewal of Christianity throughout Britain. East Anglia, conquered as it was, had clung to its faith. Wessex quietly became Christian again. Penda's own son, whom he had set over the Middle English, received baptism and teachers from Lindisfarne. At last the missionaries of the new belief appeared fearlessly among the Mercians themselves. Penda gave them no hindrance. In words that mark the temper of a man of whom we would willingly know more, Bæda tells us that the old King only "hated and scorned those whom he saw not doing the works of the faith they had received." His attitude shows that Penda looked with the tolerance of his race on all questions of creed, and that he was fighting less for heathenism than for political independence. And now the growing power of Oswiu called him to the old struggle with Northumbria. In 655 he met Oswiu in the field of Winwæd by Leeds. It was in vain that the Northumbrian sought to avert Penda's attack by offers of ornaments and costly gifts. "If the pagans will not accept them," Oswiu cried at last, "let us offer them to One that will;" and he vowed that if successful he would dedicate his daughter to God, and endow twelve monasteries in his realm. Victory at last declared for the faith of Christ. Penda himself fell on the field. The river over which the Mercians fled was swollen with a great rain; it swept away the fragments of the heathen host, and the cause of the older gods was lost for ever.

Oswiu.

The terrible struggle between heathendom and Christianity was followed by a long and profound peace. For three years after the battle of Winwæd Mercia was governed by Northumbrian thegns in Oswiu's name. The

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winning of central England was a victory for Irish Christianity as well as for Oswiu. Even in Mercia itself heathendom was dead with Penda. "Being thus freed," Bæda tells us, "the Mercians with their King rejoiced to serve the true King, Christ." Its three provinces, the earlier Mercia, the Middle-English, and the Lindiswaras, were united in the bishopric of the missionary Ceadda, the St. Chad to whom Lichfield is still dedicated. Ceadda was a monk of Lindisfarne, so simple and lowly in temper that he travelled on foot on his long mission journeys till Archbishop Theodore with his own hands lifted him on horseback. The old Celtic poetry breaks out in his death-legend, as it tells us how voices of singers singing sweetly descended from heaven to the little cell beside St. Mary's Church where the bishop lay dying. Then "the same song ascended from the roof again, and returned heavenward by the way that it came." It was the soul of his brother, the missionary Cedd, come with a choir of angels to solace the last hours of Ceadda.

Cuthbert.

In Northumbria the work of his fellow missionaries has almost been lost in the glory of Cuthbert. No story better lights up for us the new religious life of the time than the story of this Apostle of the Lowlands. Born on the southern edge of the Lammermoor, Cuthbert found shelter at eight years old in a widow's house in the little village of Wrangholm. Already in youth his robust frame had a poetic sensibility which caught even in the chance word of a game a call to higher things, and a passing attack of lameness deepened the religious impression. A traveller coming in his white mantle over the hillside and stopping his horse to tend Cuthbert's injured knee seemed to him an angel. The boy's shepherd life carried him to the bleak upland, still famous as a sheepwalk, though a scant herbage scarce veils the whinstone rock. There meteors plunging into the night became to him a company of angelic spirits carrying the soul of Bishop Aidan heavenward, and his longings slowly settled into a resolute will towards a

religious life. In 651 he made his way to a group of straw-thatched log-huts in the midst of untilled solitudes where a few Irish monks from Lindisfarne had settled in the mission-station of Melrose. To-day the land is a land of poetry and romance. Cheviot and Lammermoor, Ettrick and Teviotdale, Yarrow and Annan-water, are musical with old ballads and border minstrelsy. Agriculture has chosen its valleys for her favourite seat, and drainage and steam-power have turned sedgy marshes into farm and meadow. But to see the Lowlands as they were in Cuthbert's day we must sweep meadow and farm away again, and replace them by vast solitudes, dotted here and there with clusters of wooden hovels and crossed by boggy tracks, over which travellers rode spear in hand and eye kept cautiously about them. The Northumbrian peasantry among whom he journeyed were for the most part Christians only in name. With Teutonic indifference they yielded to their thegns in nominally accepting the new Christianity as these had yielded to the king. But they retained their old superstitions side by side with the new worship; plague or mishap drove them back to a reliance on their heathen charms and amulets; and if trouble befell the Christian preachers who came settling among them, they took it as proof of the wrath of the older gods. When some log-rafts which were floating down the Tyne for the construction of an abbey at its mouth drifted with the monks who were at work on them out to sea, the rustic bystanders shouted, "Let nobody pray for them; let nobody pity these men; for they have taken away from us our old worship, and how their new-fangled customs are to be kept nobody knows." On foot, on horseback, Cuthbert wandered among listeners such as these, choosing above all the remoter mountain villages from whose roughness and poverty other teachers turned aside. Unlike his Irish comrades, he needed no interpreter as he passed from village to village; the frugal, long-headed Northumbrians listened willingly to one who was himself a peasant of the

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Lowlands, and who had caught the rough Northumbrian burr along the banks of the Leader. His patience, his humorous good sense, the sweetness of his look, told for him, and not less the stout vigorous frame which fitted the peasant-preacher for the hard life he had chosen. "Never did man die of hunger who served God faithfully," he would say, when nightfall found them supperless in the waste. "Look at the eagle overhead! God can feed us through him if He will"—and once at least he owed his meal to a fish that the scared bird let fall. A snowstorm drove his boat on the coast of Fife. "The snow closes the road along the shore," mourned his comrades; "the storm bars our way over sea." "There is still the way of heaven that lies open," said Cuthbert.

Cædmon.

While missionaries were thus labouring among its peasantry, Northumbria saw the rise of a number of monasteries, not bound indeed by the strict ties of the Benedictine rule, but gathered on the loose Celtic model of the family or the clan round some noble and wealthy person who sought devotional retirement. The most notable and wealthy of these houses was that of Streoneshalh, where Hild, a woman of royal race, reared her abbey on the cliffs of Whitby, looking out over the Northern Sea. Hild was a Northumbrian Deborah whose counsel was sought even by kings; and the double monastery over which she ruled became a seminary of bishops and priests. The sainted John of Beverley was among her scholars. But the name which really throws glory over Whitby is the name of a cowherd from whose lips during the reign of Oswiu flowed the first great English song. Though well advanced in years, Cædmon had learned nothing of the art of verse, the alliterative jingle so common among his fellows, "wherefore being sometimes at feasts, when all agreed for glee's sake to sing in turn, he no sooner saw the harp come towards him than he rose from the board and went homewards. Once when he had done thus, and gone from the feast to the

stable where he had that night charge of the cattle, there appeared to him in his sleep One who said, greeting him by name, 'Sing, Cædmon, some song to Me.' 'I cannot sing,' he answered; 'for this cause left I the feast and came hither.' He who talked with him answered 'However that be, you shall sing to Me.' 'What shall I sing?' rejoined Cædmon. 'The beginning of created things,' replied He. In the morning the cowherd stood before Hild and told his dream. Abbess and brethren alike concluded 'that heavenly grace had been conferred on him by the Lord.' They translated for Cædmon a passage in Holy Writ, 'bidding him, if he could, put the same into verse.' The next morning he gave it them composed in excellent verse, whereon the abbess, understanding the divine grace in the man, bade him quit the secular habit and take on him the monastic life." Piece by piece the sacred story was thus thrown into Cædmon's poem. "He sang of the creation of the world, of the origin of man, and of all the history of Israel; of their departure from Egypt and entering into the Promised Land; of the incarnation, passion, and resurrection of Christ, and of His ascension; of the terror of future judgement, the horror of hell-pangs, and the joys of heaven."

Synod of Whitby.

But even while Cædmon was singing the glories of Northumbria and of the Irish Church were passing away. The revival of Mercia was as rapid as its fall. Only a few years after Penda's defeat the Mercians threw off Oswiu's yoke and set Wulfhere, a son of Penda, on their throne. They were aided in their revolt, no doubt, by a religious strife which was now rending the Northumbrian realm. The labour of Aidan, the victories of Oswald and Oswiu, seemed to have annexed the north to the Irish Church. The monks of Lindisfarne, or of the new religious houses whose foundation followed that of Lindisfarne, looked for their ecclesiastical tradition, not to Rome but to Ireland; and quoted for their guidance the instructions, not of Gregory, but of Columba. Whatever claims of supremacy

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over the whole English Church might be pressed by the see of Canterbury, the real metropolitan of the Church as it existed in the North of England was the Abbot of Iona. But Oswiu's queen brought with her from Kent the loyalty of the Kentish Church to the Roman see; and the visit of two young thegns to the Imperial city raised their love of Rome into a passionate fanaticism. The elder of these, Benedict Biscop, returned to denounce the usages in which the Irish Church differed from the Roman as schismatic; and the vigour of his comrade Wilfrid stirred so hot a strife that Oswiu was prevailed upon to summon in 664 a great council at Whitby, where the future ecclesiastical allegiance of his realm should be decided. The points actually contested were trivial enough. Colman, Aidan's successor at Holy Island, pleaded for the Irish fashion of the tonsure, and for the Irish time of keeping Easter: Wilfrid pleaded for the Roman. The one disputant appealed to the authority of Columba, the other to that of St. Peter. "You own," cried the King at last to Colman, "that Christ gave to Peter the keys of the kingdom of heaven—has He given such power to Columba?" The bishop could but answer "No." "Then will I rather obey the porter of heaven," said Oswiu, "lest when I reach its gates he who has the keys in his keeping turn his back on me, and there be none to open." The humorous tone of Oswiu's decision could not hide its importance, and the synod had no sooner broken up, than Colman, followed by the whole of the Irish-born brethren and thirty of their English fellows, forsook the see of St. Aidan and sailed away to Iona. Trivial in fact as were the actual points of difference which severed the Roman Church from the Irish, the question to which communion Northumbria should belong was of immense moment to the after fortunes of England. Had the Church of Aidan finally won, the later ecclesiastical history of England would probably have resembled that of Ireland. Devoid of that power of organization which was the strength of the

Roman Church, the Celtic Church in its own Irish home took the clan system of the country as the basis of its government. Tribal quarrels and ecclesiastical controversies became inextricably confounded; and the clergy, robbed of all really spiritual influence, contributed no element save that of disorder to the state. Hundreds of wandering bishops, a vast religious authority wielded by hereditary chieftains, the dissociation of piety from morality, the absence of those larger and more humanizing influences which contact with a wider world alone can give, this is a picture which the Irish Church of later times presents to us. It was from such a chaos as this that England was saved by the victory of Rome in the Synod of Whitby. But the success of Wilfrid dispelled a yet greater danger. Had England clung to the Irish Church it must have remained spiritually isolated from the bulk of the Western world. Fallen as Rome might be from its older greatness, it preserved the traditions of civilization, of letters and art and law. Its faith still served as a bond which held together the nations that sprang from the wreck of the Empire. To fight against Rome was, as Wilfrid said, "to fight against the world." To repulse Rome was to condemn England to isolation. Dimly as such thoughts may have presented themselves to Oswiu's mind, it was the instinct of a statesman that led him to set aside the love and gratitude of his youth and to link England to Rome in the Synod of Whitby.

Theodore.

Oswiu's assent to the vigorous measures of organization undertaken by a Greek monk, Theodore of Tarsus, whom Rome despatched in 668 to secure England to her sway as Archbishop of Canterbury, marked a yet more decisive step in the new policy. The work of Theodore lay mainly in the organization of the episcopate, and thus the Church of England, as we know it to-day, is the work, so far as its outer form is concerned, of Theodore. His work was determined in its main outlines by the previous history of the English people. The conquest of the Continent had

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been wrought either by races which were already Christian, or by heathens who bowed to the Christian faith of the nations they conquered. To this oneness of religion between the German invaders of the Empire and their Roman subjects was owing the preservation of all that survived of the Roman world. The Church everywhere remained untouched. The Christian bishop became the defender of the conquered Italian or Gaul against his Gothic and Lombard conqueror, the mediator between the German and his subjects, the one bulwark against barbaric violence and oppression. To the barbarian, on the other hand, he was the representative of all that was venerable in the past, the living record of law, of letters, and of art. But in Britain the priesthood and the people had been driven out together. When Theodore came to organize the Church of England, the very memory of the older Christian Church which existed in Roman Britain had passed away. The first missionaries to the Englishmen, strangers in a heathen land, attached themselves necessarily to the courts of the kings, who were their earliest converts, and whose conversion was generally followed by that of their people. The English bishops were thus at first royal chaplains, and their diocese was naturally nothing but the kingdom. In this way realms which are all but forgotten are commemorated in the limits of existing sees. That of Rochester represented till of late an obscure kingdom of West Kent, and the frontier of the original kingdom of Mercia may be recovered by following the map of the ancient bishopric of Lichfield. In adding many sees to those he found Theodore was careful to make their dioceses co-extensive with existing tribal demarcations. But he soon passed from this extension of the episcopate to its organization. In his arrangement of dioceses, and the way in which he grouped them round the see of Canterbury, in his national synods and ecclesiastical canons, Theodore did unconsciously a political work. The old divisions of kingdoms and tribes about him,

divisions which had sprung for the most part from mere accidents of the conquest, were now fast breaking down. The smaller states were by this time practically absorbed by the three larger ones, and of these three Mercia and Wessex were compelled to bow to the superiority of Northumbria. The tendency to national unity which was to characterize the new England had thus already declared itself; but the policy of Theodore clothed with a sacred form and surrounded with divine sanctions a unity which as yet rested on no basis but the sword. The single throne of the one Primate at Canterbury accustomed men's minds to the thought of a single throne for their one temporal overlord. The regular subordination of priest to bishop, of bishop to primate, in the administration of the Church, supplied a mould on which the civil organization of the state quietly shaped itself. Above all, the councils gathered by Theodore were the first of our national gatherings for general legislation. It was at a much later time that the Wise Men of Wessex, or Northumbria, or Mercia learned to come together in the Witenagemote of all England. The synods which Theodore convened as religiously representative of the whole English nation led the way by their example to our national parliaments. The canons which these synods enacted led the way to a national system of law.

Wulfhere.

The organization of the episcopate was followed by the organization of the parish system. The mission-station or monastery from which priest or bishop went forth on journey after journey to preach and baptize naturally disappeared as the land became Christian. The missionaries turned into settled clergy. As the King's chaplain became a bishop and the kingdom his diocese, so the chaplain of an English noble became the priest and the manor his parish. But this parish system is probably later than Theodore, and the system of tithes which has been sometimes coupled with his name dates only from the close of the eighth century. What was really due to him was the

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organization of the episcopate, and the impulse which this gave to national unity. But the movement towards unity found a sudden check in the revived strength of Mercia. Wulfhere proved a vigorous and active ruler, and the peaceful reign of Oswiu left him free to build up again during seventeen years of rule (657-675) that Mercian overlordship over the tribes of mid-England which had been lost at Penda's death. He had more than his father's success. Not only did Essex again own his supremacy but even London fell into Mercian hands. The West-Saxons were driven across the Thames, and nearly all their settlements to the north of that river were annexed to the Mercian realm. Wulfhere's supremacy soon reached even south of the Thames, for Sussex in its dread of West-Saxons found protection in accepting his overlordship, and its king was rewarded by a gift of the two outlying settlements of the Jutes—the Isle of Wight and the lands of the Meonwaras along the Southampton water—which we must suppose had been reduced by Mercian arms. The industrial progress of the Mercian kingdom went hand in hand with its military advance. The forests of its western border, the marshes of its eastern coast, were being cleared and drained by monastic colonies, whose success shows the hold which Christianity had now gained over its people. Heathenism indeed still held its own in the wild western woodlands and in the yet wilder fen-country on the eastern border of the kingdom which stretched from the "Holland," the sunk, hollow land of Lincolnshire, to the channel of the Ouse, a wilderness of shallow waters and reedy islets wrapped in its own dark mist-veil and tenanted only by flocks of screaming wild-fowl. But in either quarter the new faith made its way. In the western woods Bishop Ecgwine found a site for an abbey round which gathered the town of Evesham, and the eastern fen-land was soon filled with religious houses. Here through the liberality of King Wulfhere rose the abbey of Peterborough. Here too, Guthlac, a youth of the royal

race of Mercia, sought a refuge from the world in the solitudes of Crowland, and so great was the reverence he won, that only two years had passed since his death when the stately Abbey of Crowland rose over his tomb. Earth was brought in boats to form a site; the buildings rested on oaken piles driven into the marsh; a great stone church replaced the hermit's cell; and the toil of the new brotherhood changed the pools around them into fertile meadow-land.

Ecgfrith.

In spite however of this rapid recovery of its strength by Mercia Northumbria remained the dominant state in Britain: and Ecgfrith, who succeeded Oswiu in 670, so utterly defeated Wulfhere when war broke out between them that he was glad to purchase peace by the surrender of Lincolnshire. Peace would have been purchased more hardly had not Ecgfrith's ambition turned rather to conquests over the Briton than to victories over his fellow Englishmen. The war between Briton and Englishman which had languished since the battle of Chester had been revived some twelve years before by an advance of the West-Saxons to the south-west. Unable to save the possessions of Wessex north of the Thames from the grasp of Wulfhere, their king, Cenwalh, sought for compensation in an attack on his Welsh neighbours. A victory at Bradford on the Avon enabled him to overrun the country near Mendip which had till then been held by the Britons; and a second campaign in 658, which ended in a victory on the skirts of the great forest that covered Somerset to the east, settled the West-Saxons as conquerors round the sources of the Parret. It may have been the example of the West-Saxons which spurred Ecgfrith to a series of attacks upon his British neighbours in the west which widened the bounds of his kingdom. His reign marks the highest pitch of Northumbrian power. His armies chased the Britons from the kingdom of Cumbria and made the district of Carlisle English ground. A large part of the conquered country was bestowed upon

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the see of Lindisfarne, which was at this time filled by one whom we have seen before labouring as the Apostle of the Lowlands. Cuthbert had found a new mission-station in Holy Island, and preached among the moors of Northumberland as he had preached beside the banks of Tweed. He remained there through the great secession which followed on the Synod of Whitby, and became prior of the dwindled company of brethren, now torn with endless disputes against which his patience and good humour struggled in vain. Worn out at last, he fled to a little island of basaltic rock, one of the Farne group not far from Ida's fortress of Bamborough, strewn for the most part with kelp and sea-weed, the home of the gull and the seal. In the midst of it rose his hut of rough stones and turf, dug down within deep into the rock, and roofed with logs and straw. But the reverence for his sanctity dragged Cuthbert back to fill the vacant see of Lindisfarne. He entered Carlisle, which the King had bestowed upon the bishopric, at a moment when all Northumbria was waiting for news of a fresh campaign of Ecgfrith's against the Britons in the north. The Firth of Forth had long been the limit of Northumbria, but the Picts to the north of it owned Ecgfrith's supremacy. In 685 however the King resolved on their actual subjection and marched across the Forth. A sense of coming ill weighed on Northumbria, and its dread was quickened by a memory of the curses which had been pronounced by the bishops of Ireland on its King, when his navy, setting out a year before from the newly-conquered western coast, swept the Irish shores in a raid which seemed like sacrilege to those who loved the home of Aidan and Columba. As Cuthbert bent over a Roman fountain which still stood unharmed amongst the ruins of Carlisle, the anxious bystanders thought they caught words of ill-omen falling from the old man's lips. "Perhaps," he seemed to murmur, "at this very hour the peril of the fight is over and done." "Watch and pray," he said, when they questioned him on the morrow;

"watch and pray." In a few days more a solitary fugitive escaped from the slaughter told that the Picts had turned desperately to bay as the English army entered Fife; and that Ecgfrith and the flower of his nobles lay, a ghastly ring of corpses, on the far-off moorland of Nectansmere.

Mercian greatness.

The blow was a fatal one for Northumbrian greatness, for while the Picts pressed on the kingdom from the north Æthelred, Wulfhere's successor, attacked it on the Mercian border, and the war was only ended by a peace which left him master of Middle England and free to attempt the direct conquest of the south. For the moment this attempt proved a fruitless one. Mercia was still too weak to grasp the lordship which was slipping from Northumbria's hands, while Wessex which seemed her destined prey rose at this moment into fresh power under the greatest of its early kings. Ine, the West-Saxon king whose reign covered the long period from 688 to 728, carried on during the whole of it the war which Centwine had begun. He pushed his way southward round the marshes of the Parret to a more fertile territory, and guarded the frontier of his new conquests by a wooden fort on the banks of the Tone which has grown into the present Taunton. The West-Saxons thus became masters of the whole district which now bears the name of Somerset. The conquest of Sussex and of Kent on his eastern border made Ine master of all Britain south of the Thames, and his repulse of a new Mercian King Ceolred in a bloody encounter at Wodnesburh in 714 seemed to establish the threefold division of the English race between three realms of almost equal power. But able as Ine was to hold Mercia at bay, he was unable to hush the civil strife that was the curse of Wessex, and a wild legend tells the story of the disgust which drove him from the world. He had feasted royally at one of his country houses, and on the morrow, as he rode from it, his queen bade him turn back thither. The king returned to find his house stripped of curtains and vessels, and foul with refuse and the

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dung of cattle, while in the royal bed where he had slept with Æthelburh rested a sow with her farrow of pigs. The scene had no need of the queen's comment: "See, my lord, how the fashion of this world passeth away!" In 726 he sought peace in a pilgrimage to Rome. The anarchy which had driven Ine from the throne broke out in civil strife which left Wessex an easy prey to Æthelbald, the successor of Ceolred in the Mercian realm. Æthelbald took up with better fortune the struggle of his people for supremacy over the south. He penetrated to the very heart of the West-Saxon kingdom, and his siege and capture of the royal town of Somerton in 733 ended the war. For twenty years the overlordship of Mercia was recognized by all Britain south of the Humber. It was at the head of the forces not of Mercia only but of East-Anglia, Kent, and Essex, as well as of the West-Saxons, that Æthelbald marched against the Welsh on his western border.

Bæda.

In so complete a mastery of the south the Mercian King found grounds for a hope that Northern Britain would also yield to his sway. But the dream of a single England was again destined to be foiled. Fallen as Northumbria was from its old glory, it still remained a great power. Under the peaceful reigns of Ecgfrith's successors, Aldfrith and Ceolwulf, their kingdom became the literary centre of Western Europe. No schools were more famous than those of Jarrow and York. The whole learning of the age seemed to be summed up in a Northumbrian scholar. Bæda—the Venerable Bede as later times styled him—was born about ten years after the Synod of Whitby beneath the shade of a great abbey which Benedict Biscop was rearing by the mouth of the Wear. His youth was trained and his long tranquil life was wholly spent in an offshoot of Benedict's house which was founded by his scholar Ceolfrid. Bæda never stirred from Jarrow. "I spent my whole life in the same monastery," he says, "and while attentive to the rule of my order and the service of the Church, my constant pleasure lay in learning, or teaching, or writing." The

words sketch for us a scholar's life, the more touching in its simplicity that it is the life of the first great English scholar. The quiet grandeur of a life consecrated to knowledge, the tranquil pleasure that lies in learning and teaching and writing, dawned for Englishmen in the story of Bæda. While still young he became a teacher, and six hundred monks besides strangers that flocked thither for instruction formed his school of Jarrow. It is hard to imagine how among the toils of the schoolmaster and the duties of the monk Bæda could have found time for the composition of the numerous works that made his name famous in the West. But materials for study had accumulated in Northumbria through the journeys of Wilfrid and Benedict Biscop and the libraries which were forming at Wearmouth and York. The tradition of the older Irish teachers still lingered to direct the young scholar into that path of Scriptural interpretation to which he chiefly owed his fame. Greek, a rare accomplishment in the West, came to him from the school which the Greek Archbishop Theodore founded beneath the walls of Canterbury. His skill in the ecclesiastical chant was derived from a Roman cantor whom Pope Vitalian sent in the train of Benedict Biscop. Little by little the young scholar thus made himself master of the whole range of the science of his time; he became, as Burke rightly styled him, "the father of English learning." The tradition of the older classic culture was first revived for England in his quotations of Plato and Aristotle, of Seneca and Cicero, of Lucretius and Ovid. Vergil cast over him the same spell that he cast over Dante; verses from the Æneid break his narratives of martyrdoms, and the disciple ventures on the track of the great master in a little eclogue descriptive of the approach of spring. His work was done with small aid from others. "I am my own secretary," he writes; "I make my own notes. I am my own librarian." But forty-five works remained after his death to attest his prodigious industry. In his own eyes and those of his contemporaries the most

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important among these were the commentaries and homilies upon various books of the Bible which he had drawn from the writings of the Fathers. But he was far from confining himself to theology. In treatises compiled as text-books for his scholars Bæda threw together all that the world had then accumulated in astronomy and meteorology, in physics and music, in philosophy, grammar, rhetoric, arithmetic, medicine. But the encyclopædic character of his researches left him in heart a simple Englishman. He loved his own English tongue, he was skilled in English song, his last work was a translation into English of the Gospel of St. John, and almost the last words that broke from his lips were some English rimes upon death.

But the noblest proof of his love of England lies in the work which immortalizes his name. In his "Ecclesiastical History of the English Nation," Bæda was at once the founder of mediæval history and the first English historian. All that we really know of the century and a half that follows the landing of Augustine we know from him. Wherever his own personal observation extended, the story is told with admirable detail and force. He is hardly less full or accurate in the portions which he owed to his Kentish friends, Alcwine and Nothelm. What he owed to no informant was his exquisite faculty of story-telling, and yet no story of his own telling is so touching as the story of his death. Two weeks before the Easter of 735 the old man was seized with an extreme weakness and loss of breath. He still preserved however his usual pleasantness and gay good-humour, and in spite of prolonged sleeplessness continued his lectures to the pupils about him. Verses of his own English tongue broke from time to time from the master's lip—rude rimes that told how before the "need-fare," Death's stern "must go," none can enough bethink him what is to be his doom for good or ill. The tears of Bæda's scholars mingled with his song. "We never read without weeping," writes one of them. So the days rolled on to Ascension-tide, and still master

and pupils toiled at their work, for Bæda longed to bring to an end his version of St. John's Gospel into the English tongue and his extracts from Bishop Isidore. "I don't want my boys to read a lie," he answered those who would have had him rest, "or to work to no purpose after I am gone." A few days before Ascension-tide his sickness grew upon him, but he spent the whole day in teaching, only saying cheerfully to his scholars, "Learn with what speed you may; I know not how long I may last." The dawn broke on another sleepless night, and again the old man called his scholars round him and bade them write. "There is still a chapter wanting," said the scribe, as the morning drew on, "and it is hard for thee to question thyself any longer." "It is easily done," said Bæda; "take thy pen and write quickly." Amid tears and farewells the day wore on to eventide. "There is yet one sentence unwritten, dear master," said the boy. "Write it quickly," bade the dying man. "It is finished now," said the little scribe at last. "You speak truth," said the master; "all is finished now." Placed upon the pavement, his head supported in his scholar's arms, his face turned to the spot where he was wont to pray, Bæda chanted the solemn "Glory to God." As his voice reached the close of his song he passed quietly away.

Fall of Æthelbald.

First among English scholars, first among English theologians, first among English historians, it is in the monk of Jarrow that English literature strikes its roots. In the six hundred scholars who gathered round him for instruction he is the father of our national education. In his physical treatises he is the first figure to which our science looks back. But the quiet tenor of his scholar's life was broken by the growing anarchy of Northumbria, and by threats of war from its Mercian rival. At last Æthelbald marched on a state which seemed exhausted by civil discord and ready for submission to his arms. But its king Eadberht showed himself worthy of the kings that had gone before him, and in 740 he threw back Æthelbald's attack in

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a repulse which not only ruined the Mercian ruler's hopes of northern conquest but loosened his hold on the south. Already goaded to revolt by exactions, the West-Saxons were roused to a fresh struggle for independence, and after twelve years of continued outbreaks the whole people mustered at Burford under the golden dragon of their race. The fight was a desperate one, but a sudden panic seized the Mercian King. He fled from the field, and a decisive victory freed Wessex from the Mercian yoke. Four years later, in 757, its freedom was maintained by a new victory at Secandun; but amidst the rout of his host Æthelbald redeemed the one hour of shame that had tarnished his glory; he refused to fly, and fell fighting on the field.

Offa.

But though Eadberht might beat back the inroads of the Mercians and even conquer Strathclyde, before the anarchy of his own kingdom he could only fling down his sceptre and seek a refuge in the cloister of Lindisfarne. From the death of Bæda the history of Northumbria became in fact little more than a wild story of lawlessness and bloodshed. King after king was swept away by treason and revolt, the country fell into the hands of its turbulent nobles, its very fields lay waste, and the land was scourged by famine and plague. An anarchy almost as complete fell on Wessex after the recovery of its freedom. Only in Mid-England was there any sign of order and settled rule. The two crushing defeats at Burford and Secandun, though they had brought about revolts which stripped Mercia of all the conquests it had made, were far from having broken the Mercian power. Under the long reign of Offa, which went on from 755 to 796, it rose again to all but its old dominion. Since the dissolution of the temporary alliance which Penda formed with the Welsh King Cadwallon the war with the Britons in the west had been the one great hindrance to the progress of Mercia. But under Offa Mercia braced herself to the completion of her British conquests. Beating back the Welsh from Hereford,

and carrying his own ravages into the heart of Wales, Offa in 779 drove the King of Powys from his capital, which changed its old name of Pengwern for the significant English title of the Town in the Scrub or Bush, Scrobbesbyryg, Shrewsbury. Experience however had taught the Mercians the worthlessness of raids like these and Offa resolved to create a military border by planting a settlement of Englishmen between the Severn, which had till then served as the western boundary of the English race, and the huge "Offa's Dyke" which he drew from the mouth of Wye to that of Dee. Here, as in the later conquests of the West-Saxons, the old plan of extermination was definitely abandoned and the Welsh who chose to remain dwelled undisturbed among their English conquerors. From these conquests over the Britons Offa turned to build up again the realm which had been shattered at Secandun. But his progress was slow. A reconquest of Kent in 774 woke anew the jealousy of the West-Saxons; and though Offa repulsed their attack at Bensington in 777 the victory was followed by several years of inaction. It was not till Wessex was again weakened by fresh anarchy that he was able to seize East Anglia and restore his realm to its old bounds under Wulfhere. Further he could not go. A Kentish revolt occupied him till his death in 796, and his successor Cenwulf did little but preserve the realm he bequeathed him. At the close of the eighth century the drift of the English peoples towards a national unity was in fact utterly arrested. The work of Northumbria had been foiled by the resistance of Mercia; the effort of Mercia had broken down before the resistance of Wessex. A threefold division seemed to have stamped itself upon the land; and so complete was the balance of power between the three realms which parted it that no subjection of one to the other seemed likely to fuse the English tribes into an English people.

CHAPTER III.

WESSEX AND THE NORTHMEN.

796-947.

The Northmen.

THE union which each English kingdom in turn had failed to bring about was brought about by the pressure of the Northmen. The dwellers in the isles of the Baltic or on either side of the Scandinavian peninsula had lain hidden till now from Western Christendom, waging their battle for existence with a stern climate, a barren soil, and stormy seas. It was this hard fight for life that left its stamp on the temper of Dane, Swede, or Norwegian alike, that gave them their defiant energy, their ruthless daring, their passion for freedom and hatred of settled rule. Forays and plunder raids over sea eked out their scanty livelihood, and at the close of the eighth century these raids found a wider sphere than the waters of the northern seas. Tidings of the wealth garnered in the abbeys and towns of the new Christendom which had risen from the wreck of Rome drew the pirates slowly southwards to the coasts of Northern Gaul; and just before Offa's death their boats touched the shores of Britain. To men of that day it must have seemed as though the world had gone back three hundred years. The same northern fiords poured forth their pirate-fleets as in the days of Hengest or Cerdic. There was the same wild panic as the black boats of the invaders struck inland along the river-reaches or moored round the river isles, the same sights of horror, firing of homesteads, slaughter of men, women driven off to

slavery or shame, children tossed on pikes or sold in the market-place, as when the English themselves had attacked Britain. Christian priests were again slain at the altar by worshippers of Woden; letters, arts, religion, government disappeared before these Northmen as before the Northmen of three centuries before.

Ecgberht.

In 794 a pirate band plundered the monasteries of Jarrow and Holy Island, and the presence of the freebooters soon told on the political balance of the English realms. A great revolution was going on in the south, where Mercia was torn by civil wars which followed on Cenwulf's death while the civil strife of the West-Saxons was hushed by a new king, Ecgberht. In Offa's days Ecgberht had failed in his claim of the crown of Wessex and had been driven to fly for refuge to the court of the Franks. He remained there through the memorable year during which Charles the Great restored the Empire of the West, and returned in 802 to be quietly welcomed as King by the West-Saxon people. A march into the heart of Cornwall and the conquest of this last fragment of the British kingdom in the south-west freed his hands for a strife with Mercia which broke out in 825 when the Mercian King Beornwulf marched into the heart of Wiltshire. A victory of Ecgberht at Ellandun gave all England south of Thames to the West-Saxons and the defeat of Beornwulf spurred the men of East-Anglia to rise in a desperate revolt against Mercia. Two great overthrows at their hands had already spent its strength when Ecgberht crossed the Thames in 827, and the realm of Penda and Offa bowed without a struggle to its conqueror. But Ecgberht had wider aims than those of supremacy over Mercia alone. The dream of a union of all England drew him to the north. Northumbria was still strong; in learning and arts it stood at the head of the English race; and under a king like Eadberht it would have withstood Ecgberht as resolutely as it had withstood Æthelbald. But the ruin of Jarrow and Holy Island had cast on it a spell of terror. Torn by civil

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strife, and desperate of finding in itself the union needed to meet the Northmen, Northumbria sought union and deliverance in subjection to a foreign master. Its thegns met Ecgberht in Derbyshire, and owned the supremacy of Wessex.

Conquests of the Northmen.

With the submission of Northumbria the work which Oswiu and Æthelbald had failed to do was done, and the whole English race was for the first time knit together under a single rule. The union came not a moment too soon. Had the old severance of people from people, the old civil strife within each separate realm gone on it is hard to see how the attacks of the Northmen could have been withstood. They were already settled in Ireland; and from Ireland a northern host landed in 836 at Charmouth in Dorsetshire strong enough to drive Ecgberht, when he hastened to meet them, from the field. His victory the year after at Hengestdun won a little rest for the land; but Æthelwulf who mounted the throne on Ecgberht's death in 839 had to face an attack which was only beaten off by years of hard fighting. Æthelwulf fought bravely in defence of his realm; in his defeat at Charmouth as in a final victory at Aclea in 851 he led his troops in person against the sea-robbers; and his success won peace for the land through the short and uneventful reigns of his sons Æthelbald and Æthelberht. But the northern storm burst in full force upon England when a third son, Æthelred, followed his brothers on the throne. The Northmen were now settled on the coast of Ireland and the coast of Gaul; they were masters of the sea; and from west and east alike they closed upon Britain. While one host from Ireland fell on the Scot kingdom north of the Firth of Forth, another from Scandinavia landed in 866 on the coast of East Anglia under Hubba and marched the next year upon York. A victory over two claimants of its crown gave the pirates Northumbria; and their two armies united at Nottingham in 868 for an attack on the Mercian realm, Mercia was saved by a march of King Æthelred to Not-

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tingham, but the peace he made there with the Northmen left them leisure to prepare for an invasion of East-Anglia, whose under-King, Eadmund, brought prisoner before their leaders, was bound to a tree and shot to death with arrows. His martyrdom by the heathen made Eadmund the St. Sebastian of English legend; in later days his figure gleamed from the pictured windows of every church along the eastern coast, and the stately Abbey of St. Edmundsbury rose over his relics. With him ended the line of East-Anglian under-kings, for his kingdom was not only conquered but divided among the soldiers of the pirate host, and their leader Guthrum assumed its crown. Then the Northmen turned to the richer spoil of the great abbeys of the Fen. Peterborough, Crowland, Ely went up in flames, and their monks fled or were slain among the ruins. Mercia, though still spared from actual conquest, cowered panic-stricken before the Northmen, and by payment of tribute owned them as its overlords.

Wessex and the Northmen.

In five years the work of Ecgberht had been undone, and England north of the Thames had been torn from the overlordship of Wessex. So rapid a change could only have been made possible by the temper of the conquered kingdoms. To them the conquest was simply their transfer from one overlord to another, and it may be that in all there were men who preferred the overlordship of the Northman to the overlordship of the West-Saxon. But the loss of the subject kingdoms left Wessex face to face with the invaders. The time had now come for it to fight, not for supremacy, but for life. As yet the land seemed paralyzed by terror. With the exception of his one march on Nottingham, King Æthelred had done nothing to save his under-kingdoms from the wreck. But the pirates no sooner pushed up Thames to Reading in 871 than the West-Saxons, attacked on their own soil, turned fiercely at bay. A desperate attack drove the Northmen from Ashdown on the heights that overlooked the Vale of White Horse, but their camp in the tongue of land between the

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Kennet and Thames proved impregnable. Æthelred died in the midst of the struggle, and his brother Ælfred, who now became king, bought the withdrawal of the pirates and a few years' breathing-space for his realm. It was easy for the quick eye of Ælfred to see that the Northmen had withdrawn simply with the view of gaining firmer footing for a new attack; three years indeed had hardly passed before Mercia was invaded and its under-King driven over sea to make place for a tributary of the invaders. From Repton half their host marched northwards to the Tyne, while Guthrum led the rest into his kingdom of East-Anglia to prepare for their next year's attack on Wessex. In 876 his fleet appeared before Wareham, and when driven thence by Ælfred, the Northmen threw themselves into Exeter. Their presence there was likely to stir a rising of the Welsh, and through the winter Ælfred girded himself for this new peril. At break of spring his army closed round the town, a hired fleet cruised off the coast to guard against rescue, and the defeat of their fellows at Wareham in an attempt to relieve them drove the pirates to surrender. They swore to leave Wessex and withdrew to Gloucester. But Ælfred had hardly disbanded his troops when his enemies, roused by the arrival of fresh hordes eager for plunder, reappeared at Chippenham, and in the opening of 878 marched ravaging over the land. The surprize of Wessex was complete, and for a month or two the general panic left no hope of resistance. Ælfred, with his small band of followers, could only throw himself into a fort raised hastily in the isle of Athelney among the marshes of the Parret, a position from which he could watch closely the movements of his foes. But with the first burst of spring he called the thegns of Somerset to his standard, and still gathering troops as he moved marched through Wiltshire on the Northmen. He found their host at Edington, defeated it in a great battle, and after a siege of fourteen days forced them to surrender and to bind themselves by a solemn peace or "frith" at Wedmore in Somerset. In form

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the Peace of Wedmore seemed a surrender of the bulk of Britain to its invaders. All Northumbria, all East-Anglia, all Central England east of a line which stretched from Thames' mouth along the Lea to Bedford, thence along the Ouse to Watling Street, and by Watling Street to Chester, was left subject to the Northmen. Throughout this 'Danelagh'—as it was called—the conquerors settled down among the conquered population as lords of the soil, thickly in Northern Britain, more thinly in its central districts, but everywhere guarding jealously their old isolation and gathering in separate 'heres' or armies round towns which were only linked in loose confederacies. The peace had in fact saved little more than Wessex itself. But in saving Wessex it saved England. The spell of terror was broken. The tide of invasion turned. From an attitude of attack the Northmen were thrown back on an attitude f defence. The whole reign of Ælfred was a preparation for a fresh struggle that was to wrest back from the pirates the land they had won.

Ælfred.

What really gave England heart for such a struggle was the courage and energy of the King himself. Ælfred was the noblest as he was the most complete embodiment of all that is great, all that is loveable, in the English temper. He combined as no other man has ever combined its practical energy, its patient and enduring force, its profound sense of duty, the reserve and self-control that steadies in it a wide outlook and a restless daring, its temperance and fairness, its frank geniality, its sensitiveness to affection, its poetic tenderness, its deep and passionate religion. Religion indeed was the groundwork of Ælfred's character. His temper was instinct with piety. Everywhere throughout his writings that remain to us the name of God, the thought of God, stir him to outbursts of ecstatic adoration. But he was no mere saint. He felt none of that scorn of the world about him which drove the nobler souls of his day to monastery or hermitage. Vexed as he was by sickness and constant

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pain, his temper took no touch of asceticism. His rare geniality, a peculiar elasticity and mobility of nature, gave colour and charm to his life. A sunny frankness and openness of spirit breathes in the pleasant chat of his books, and what he was in his books he showed himself in his daily converse. Ælfred was in truth an artist, and both the lights and shadows of his life were those of the artistic temperament. His love of books, his love of strangers, his questionings of travellers and scholars, betray an imaginative restlessness that longs to break out of the narrow world of experience which hemmed him in. At one time he jots down news of a voyage to the unknown seas of the north. At another he listens to tidings which his envoys bring back from the churches of Malabar. And side by side with this restless outlook of the artistic nature he showed its tenderness and susceptibility, its vivid apprehension of unseen danger, its craving for affection, its sensitiveness to wrong. It was with himself rather than with his reader that he communed as thoughts of the foe without, of ingratitude and opposition within, broke the calm pages of Gregory or Boethius. "Oh, what a happy man was he," he cries once, "that man that had a naked sword hanging over his head from a single thread; so as to me it always did!" "Desirest thou power?" he asks at another time. "But thou shalt never obtain it without sorrows—sorrows from strange folk, and yet keener sorrows from thine own kindred." "Hardship and sorrow!" he breaks out again, "not a king but would wish to be without these if he could. But I know that he cannot!" The loneliness which breathes in words like these has often begotten in great rulers a cynical contempt of men and the judgements of men. But cynicism found no echo in the large and sympathetic temper of Ælfred. He not only longed for the love of his subjects, but for the remembrance of "generations" to come. Nor did his inner gloom or anxiety check for an instant his vivid and versatile activity. To the scholars he gathered round him

he seemed the very type of a scholar, snatching every hour he could find to read or listen to books read to him. The singers of his court found in him a brother singer, gathering the old songs of his people to teach them to his children, breaking his renderings from the Latin with simple verse, solacing himself in hours of depression with the music of the Psalms. He passed from court and study to plan buildings and instruct craftsmen in gold-work, to teach even falconers and dog-keepers their business. But all this versatility and ingenuity was controlled by a cool good sense. Ælfred was a thorough man of business. He was careful of detail, laborious, methodical. He carried in his bosom a little handbook in which he noted things as they struck him—now a bit of family genealogy, now a prayer, now such a story as that of Ealdhelm playing minstrel on the bridge. Each hour of the day had its appointed task, there was the same order in the division of his revenue and in the arrangement of his court.

Wide however and various as was the King's temper, its range was less wonderful than its harmony. Of the narrowness, of the want of proportion, of the predominance of one quality over another which goes commonly with an intensity of moral purpose Ælfred showed not a trace. Scholar and soldier, artist and man of business, poet and saint, his character kept that perfect balance which charms us in no other Englishman save Shakspere. But full and harmonious as his temper was, it was the temper of a king. Every power was bent to the work of rule. His practical energy found scope for itself in the material and administrative restoration of the wasted land. His intellectual activity breathed fresh life into education and literature. His capacity for inspiring trust and affection drew the hearts of Englishmen to a common centre, and began the upbuilding of a new England. And all was guided, controlled, ennobled by a single aim. "So long as I have lived," said the King as life closed about him, "I have striven to live worthily." Little by little men came

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to know what such a life of worthiness meant. Little by little they came to recognize in Ælfred a ruler of higher and nobler stamp than the world had seen. Never had it seen a King who lived solely for the good of his people. Never had it seen a ruler who set aside every personal aim to devote himself solely to the welfare of those whom he ruled. It was this grand self-mastery that gave him his power over the men about him. Warrior and conqueror as he was, they saw him set aside at thirty the warrior's dream of conquest; and the self-renouncement of Wedmore struck the key-note of his reign. But still more is it this height and singleness of purpose, this absolute concentration of the noblest faculties to the noblest aim, that lifts Ælfred out of the narrow bounds of Wessex. If the sphere of his action seems too small to justify the comparison of him with the few whom the world owns as its greatest men, he rises to their level in the moral grandeur of his life. And it is this which has hallowed his memory among his own English people. "I desire," said the King in some of his latest words, "I desire to leave to the men that come after me a remembrance of me in good works." His aim has been more than fulfilled. His memory has come down to us with a living distinctness through the mists of exaggeration and legend which time gathered round it. The instinct of the people has clung to him with a singular affection. The love which he won a thousand years ago has lingered round his name from that day to this. While every other name of those earlier times has all but faded from the recollection of Englishmen, that of Ælfred remains familiar to every English child.

English Literature.

The secret of Ælfred's government lay in his own vivid energy. He could hardly have chosen braver or more active helpers than those whom he employed both in his political and in his educational efforts. The children whom he trained to rule proved the ablest rulers of their time. But at the outset of his reign he stood alone, and what work was to be done was done by the King himself.

His first efforts were directed to the material restoration of his realm. The burnt and wasted country saw its towns built again, forts erected in positions of danger, new abbeys founded, the machinery of justice and government restored, the laws codified and amended. Still more strenuous were Ælfred's efforts for its moral and intellectual restoration. Even in Mercia and Northumbria the pirates' sword had left few survivors of the schools of Ecgberht or Bæda, and matters were even worse in Wessex which had been as yet the most ignorant of the English kingdoms. "When I began to reign," said Ælfred, "I cannot remember one priest south of the Thames who could render his service-book into English." For instructors indeed he could find only a few Mercian prelates and priests with one Welsh bishop, Asser. "Formerly," the King writes bitterly, "men came hither from foreign lands to seek for instruction, and now when we desire it we can only obtain it from abroad." But his mind was far from being prisoned within his own island. He sent a Norwegian ship-master to explore the White Sea, and Wulfstan to trace the coast of Esthonia; envoys bore his presents to the churches of India and Jerusalem, and an annual mission carried Peter's-pence to Rome. But it was with the Franks that his intercourse was closest, and it was from them that he drew the scholars to aid him in his work of education. A scholar named Grimbald came from St. Omer to preside over his new abbey at Winchester; and John, the old Saxon, was fetched from the abbey of Corbey to rule a monastery and school that Ælfred's gratitude for his deliverance from the Danes raised in the marshes of Athelney. The real work however to be done was done, not by these teachers but by the King himself. Ælfred established a school for the young nobles in his court, and it was to the need of books for these scholars in their own tongue that we owe his most remarkable literary effort. He took his books as he found them—they were the popular manuals of his age—the Consolation of Boethius, the Pastoral of Pope Gregory,

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the compilation of Orosius, then the one accessible handbook of universal history, and the history of his own people by Bæda. He translated these works into English, but he was far more than a translator, he was an editor for the people. Here he omitted, there he expanded. He enriched Orosius by a sketch of the new geographical discoveries in the North. He gave a West-Saxon form to his selections from Bæda. In one place he stops to explain his theory of government, his wish for a thicker population, his conception of national welfare as consisting in a due balance of priest, soldier, and churl. The mention of Nero spurs him to an outbreak on the abuses of power. The cold Providence of Boethius gives way to an enthusiastic acknowledgement of the goodness of God. As he writes, his large-hearted nature flings off its royal mantle, and he talks as a man to men. "Do not blame me," he prays with a charming simplicity, "if any know Latin better than I, for every man must say what he says and do what he does according to his ability." But simple as was his aim, Ælfred changed the whole front of our literature. Before him, England possessed in her own tongue one great poem and a train of ballads and battle-songs. Prose she had none. The mighty roll of the prose books that fill her libraries begins with the translations of Ælfred, and above all with the chronicle of his reign. It seems likely that the King's rendering of Bæda's history gave the first impulse towards the compilation of what is known as the English or Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, which was certainly thrown into its present form during his reign. The meagre lists of the Kings of Wessex and the bishops of Winchester, which had been preserved from older times, were roughly expanded into a national history by insertions from Bæda: but it is when it reaches the reign of Ælfred that the chronicle suddenly widens into the vigorous narrative, full of life and originality, that marks the gift of a new power to the English tongue. Varying as it does from age to age in historic value, it remains the first

vernacular history of any Teutonic people, and save for the Gothic translations of Ulfilas, the earliest and most venerable monument of Teutonic prose.

But all this literary activity was only a part of that general upbuilding of Wessex by which Ælfred was preparing for a fresh contest with the stranger. He knew that the actual winning back of the Danelagh must be a work of the sword, and through these long years of peace he was busy with the creation of such a force as might match that of the Northmen. A fleet grew out of the little squadron which Ælfred had been forced to man with Frisian seamen. The national fyrd or levy of all freemen at the King's call was reorganized. It was now divided into two halves, one of which served in the field while the other guarded its own burhs and townships and served to relieve its fellow when the men's forty days of service were ended. A more disciplined military force was provided by subjecting all owners of five hides of land to thegn-service, a step which recognized the change that had now substituted the thegn for the eorl and in which we see the beginning of a feudal system. How effective these measures were was seen when the new resistance they met on the Continent drove the Northmen to a fresh attack on Britain. In 893 a large fleet steered for the Andredsweald, while the sea-king Hasting entered the Thames. Ælfred held both at bay through the year till the men of the Danelagh rose at their comrades' call. Wessex stood again front to front with the Northmen. But the King's measures had made the realm strong enough to set aside its old policy of defence for one of vigorous attack. His son Eadward and his son-in-law Æthelred, whom he had set as Ealdorman over what remained of Mercia, showed themselves as skilful and active as the King. The aim of the Northmen was to rouse again the hostility of the Welsh, but while Ælfred held Exeter against their fleet Eadward and Æthelred caught their army near the Severn and overthrew it with a vast slaughter at

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Buttington. The destruction of their camp on the Lea by the united English forces ended the war; in 897 Hasting again withdrew across the Channel, and the Danelagh made peace. It was with the peace he had won still about him that Ælfred died in 901, and warrior as his son Eadward had shown himself, he clung to his father's policy of rest. It was not till 910 that a fresh rising of the Northmen forced Ælfred's children to gird themselves to the conquest of the Danelagh.

Eadward the Elder.

While Eadward bridled East-Anglia his sister Æthelflæd, in whose hands Æthelred's death left English Mercia, attacked the "Five Boroughs," a rude confederacy which had taken the place of the older Mercian kingdom. Derby represented the original Mercia on the upper Trent, Lincoln the Lindiswaras, Leicester the Middle-English, Stamford the province of the Gyrwas, Nottingham probably that of the Southumbrians. Each of these "Five Boroughs" seems to have been ruled by its earl with his separate "host;" within each twelve "lawmen" administered Danish law, while a common justice-court existed for the whole confederacy. In her attack on this powerful league Æthelflæd abandoned the older strategy of battle and raid for that of siege and fortress-building. Advancing along the line of Trent, she fortified Tamworth and Stafford on its head-waters; when a rising in Gwent called her back to the Welsh border, her army stormed Brecknock; and its king no sooner fled for shelter to the Northmen in whose aid he had risen than Æthelflæd at once closed on Derby. Raids from Middle-England failed to draw the Lady of Mercia from her prey; and Derby was hardly her own when, turning southward, she forced the surrender of Leicester. The brilliancy of his sister's exploits had as yet eclipsed those of the King, but the son of Ælfred was a vigorous and active ruler; he had repulsed a dangerous inroad of the Northmen from France, summoned no doubt by the cry of distress from their brethren in England, and had bridled East-Anglia to the south by the erection of

forts at Hertford and Witham. On the death of Æthelflæd in 918 he came boldly to the front. Annexing Mercia to Wessex, and thus gathering the whole strength of the kingdom into his single hand, he undertook the systematic reduction of the Danelagh. South of the Middle-English and the Fens lay a tract watered by the Ouse and the Nen—originally the district of a tribe known as the South-English, and now, like the Five Boroughs of the north, grouped round the towns of Bedford, Huntingdon, and Northampton. The reduction of these was followed by that of East-Anglia; the Northmen of the Fens submitted with Stamford, the Southumbrians with Nottingham. Eadward's Mercian troops had already seized Manchester; he himself was preparing to complete his conquests, when in 924 the whole of the North suddenly laid itself at his feet. Not merely Northumbria but the Scots and the Britons of Strathclyde "chose him to father and lord."

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The triumph was his last. Eadward died in 925, but the reign of his son Æthelstan, Ælfred's golden-haired grandson whom the King had girded as a child with a sword set in a golden scabbard and a gem-studded belt, proved even more glorious than his own. In spite of its submission the North had still to be won. Dread of the Northmen had drawn Scot and Cumbrian to their acknowledgement of Eadward's overlordship, but Æthelstan no sooner incorporated Northumbria with his dominions than dread of Wessex took the place of dread of the Danelagh. The Scot King Constantine organized a league of Scot, Cumbrian, and Welshman with the Northmen. The league was broken by Æthelstan's rapid action in 926; the North-Welsh were forced to pay annual tribute, to march in his armies, and to attend his councils; the West-Welsh of Cornwall were reduced to a like vassalage, and finally driven from Exeter, which they had shared till then with its English inhabitants. But ten years later the same league called Æthelstan again to the North; and though Constantine was punished by an army which wasted his

Æthelstan.

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kingdom while a fleet ravaged its coasts to Caithness the English army had no sooner withdrawn than Northumbria rose in 937 at the appearance of a fleet of pirates from Ireland under the sea-king Anlaf in the Humber. Scot and Cumbrian fought beside the Northmen against the West-Saxon King; but his victory at Brunanburh crushed the confederacy and won peace till his death. His son Eadmund was but a boy at his accession in 940, and the North again rose in revolt. The men of the Five Boroughs joined their kinsmen in Northumbria; once Eadmund was driven to a peace which left him King but south of the Watling Street; and only years of hard fighting again laid the Danelagh at his feet.

Dunstan.

But policy was now to supplement the work of the sword. The completion of the West-Saxon realm was in fact reserved for the hands, not of a king or warrior, but of a priest. Dunstan stands first in the line of ecclesiastical statesmen who counted among them Lanfranc and Wolsey and ended in Laud. He is still more remarkable in himself, in his own vivid personality after eight centuries of revolution and change. He was born in the little hamlet of Glastonbury, the home of his father, Heorstan, a man of wealth and brother of the bishops of Wells and of Winchester. It must have been in his father's hall that the fair, diminutive boy, with his scant but beautiful hair, caught his love for "the vain songs of heathendom, the trifling legends, the funeral chaunts," which afterwards roused against him the charge of sorcery. Thence too he might have derived his passionate love of music, and his custom of carrying his harp in hand on journey or visit. Wandering scholars of Ireland had left their books in the monastery of Glastonbury, as they left them along the Rhine and the Danube; and Dunstan plunged into the study of sacred and profane letters till his brain broke down in delirium. So famous became his knowledge in the neighbourhood that news of it reached the court of Æthelstan, but his appearance there was the signal for

a burst of ill-will among the courtiers. They drove him from the king's train, threw him from his horse as he passed through the marshes, and with the wild passion of their age trampled him under foot in the mire. The outrage ended in fever, and Dunstan rose from his sick-bed a monk. But the monastic profession was then little more than a vow of celibacy and his devotion took no ascetic turn. His nature in fact was sunny, versatile, artistic; full of strong affections, and capable of inspiring others with affections as strong. Quick-witted, of tenacious memory, a ready and fluent speaker, gay and genial in address, an artist, a musician, he was at the same time an indefatigable worker at books, at building, at handicraft. As his sphere began to widen we see him followed by a train of pupils, busy with literature, writing, harping, painting, designing. One morning a lady summons him to her house to design a robe which she is embroidering, and as he bends with her maidens over their toil his harp hung upon the wall sounds without mortal touch tones which the excited ears around frame into a joyous antiphon.

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From this scholar-life Dunstan was called to a wider sphere of activity by the accession of Eadmund. But the old jealousies revived at his reappearance at court, and counting the game lost Dunstan prepared again to withdraw. The King had spent the day in the chase; the red deer which he was pursuing dashed over Cheddar cliffs, and his horse only checked itself on the brink of the ravine at the moment when Eadmund in the bitterness of death was repenting of his injustice to Dunstan. He was at once summoned on the King's return. "Saddle your horse," said Eadmund, "and ride with me." The royal train swept over the marshes to his home; and the King, bestowing on him the kiss of peace, seated him in the abbot's chair as Abbot of Glastonbury. Dunstan became one of Eadmund's councillors and his hand was seen in the settlement of the North. It was the hostility of the states around it to the West-Saxon rule which had roused so

Conquest of the Danelagh.

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often revolt in the Danelagh; but from this time we hear nothing more of the hostility of Bernicia, while Strathclyde was conquered by Eadmund and turned adroitly to account in winning over the Scots to his cause. The greater part of it was granted to their King Malcolm on terms that he should be Eadmund's fellow-worker by sea and land. The league of Scot and Briton was thus finally broken up, and the fidelity of the Scots secured by their need of help in holding down their former ally. The settlement was soon troubled by the young King's death. As he feasted at Pucklechurch in the May of 946, Leofa, a robber whom Eadmund had banished from the land, entered the hall, seated himself at the royal board, and drew sword on the cup-bearer when he bade him retire. The King sprang in wrath to his thegn's aid, and seizing Leofa by the hair, flung him to the ground; but in the struggle the robber drove his dagger to Eadmund's heart. His death at once stirred fresh troubles in the North; the Danelagh rose against his brother and successor, Eadred, and some years of hard fighting were needed before it was again driven to own the English supremacy. But with its submission in 954 the work of conquest was done. Dogged as his fight had been, the Northman at last owned himself beaten. From the moment of Eadred's final triumph all resistance came to an end. The Danelagh ceased to be a force in English politics. North might part anew from South; men of Yorkshire might again cross swords with men of Hampshire; but their strife was henceforth a local strife between men of the same people: it was a strife of Englishmen with Englishmen, and not of Englishmen with Northmen.

CHAPTER IV.

FEUDALISM AND THE MONARCHY.

954—1071.

THE fierceness of the Northman's onset had hidden the real character of his attack. To the men who first fronted the pirates it seemed as though the story of the world had gone back to the days when the German barbarians first broke in upon the civilized world. It was so above all in Britain. All that tradition told of the Englishmen's own attack on the island was seen in the Northmen's attack on it. Boats of marauders from the northern seas again swarmed off the British coast; church and town were again the special object of attack; the invaders again settled on the conquered soil; heathendom again proved stronger than the faith of Christ. But the issues of the two attacks showed the mighty difference between them. When the English ceased from their onset upon Roman Britain Roman Britain had disappeared, and a new people of conquerors stood alone on the conquered land. The Northern storm on the other hand left land, people, government unchanged. England remained a country of Englishmen. The conquerors sank into the mass of the conquered, and Woden yielded without a struggle to Christ. The strife between Briton and Englishman was in fact a strife between men of different races, while the strife between Northman and Englishman was a strife between men whose race was the same. The followers of Hengest or of Ida were men

Absorption of the Northmen.

utterly alien from the life of Britain, strange to its arts, its culture, its wealth, as they were strange to the social degradation which Rome had brought on its province. But the Northman was little more than an Englishman bringing back to an England which had drifted far from its origin the barbaric life of its earliest forefathers. Nowhere throughout Europe was the fight so fierce, because nowhere else were the fighters men of one blood and one speech. But just for this reason the union of the combatants was nowhere so peaceful or so complete. The victory of the house of Ælfred only hastened a process of fusion which was already going on. From the first moment of his settlement in the Danelagh the Northman had been passing into an Englishman. The settlers were few; they were scattered among a large population; in tongue, in manner, in institutions there was little to distinguish them from the men among whom they dwelt. Moreover their national temper helped on the process of assimilation. Even in France, where difference of language and difference of custom seemed to interpose an impassable barrier between the Northman settled in Normandy and his neighbours, he was fast becoming a Frenchman. In England, where no such barriers existed, the assimilation was even quicker. The two peoples soon became confounded. In a few years a Northman in blood was Archbishop of Canterbury and another Northman in blood was Archbishop of York.

The three Northern Kingdoms.

The fusion might have been delayed if not wholly averted by continued descents from the Scandinavian homeland. But with Eadred's reign the long attack which the Northman had directed against western Christendom came, for a while at least, to an end. On the world which it assailed its results had been immense. It had utterly changed the face of the west. The empire of Ecgberht, the empire of Charles the Great, had been alike dashed to pieces. But break and change as it might, Christendom had held the Northmen at bay. The Scandinavian power which had

grown up on the western seas had disappeared like a dream. In Ireland the Northman's rule had dwindled to the holding of a few coast towns. In France his settlements had shrunk to the one settlement of Normandy. In England every Northman was a subject of the English King. Even the Empire of the Seas had passed from the Sea-Kings' hands. It was an English and not a Scandinavian fleet that for fifty years to come held mastery in the English and the Irish Channels. With Eadred's victory in fact the struggle seemed to have reached its close. Stray pirate boats still hung off headland and coast; stray vikings still shoved out in spring-tide to gather booty. But for nearly half-a-century to come no great pirate fleet made its way to the west, or landed on the shores of Britain. The energies of the Northmen were in fact absorbed through these years in the political changes of Scandinavia itself. The old isolation of fiord from fiord and dale from dale was breaking down. The little commonwealths which had held so jealously aloof from each other were being drawn together whether they would or no. In each of the three regions of the north great kingdoms were growing up. In Sweden King Eric made himself lord of the petty states about him. In Denmark King Gorm built up in the same way a monarchy of the Danes. Norway, though it lingered long, followed at last in the same track. Legend told how one of its many rulers, Harald of Westfold, sent his men to bring him Gytha of Hordaland, a girl he had chosen for wife, and how Gytha sent his men back again with taunts at his petty realm. The taunts went home, and Harald vowed never to clip or comb his hair till he had made all Norway his own. So every springtide came war and hosting, harrying and burning, till a great fight at Hafursfiord settled the matter, and Harald "Ugly-Head" as men called him while the strife lasted was free to shear his locks again and became Harald "Fair-Hair." The Northmen loved no master, and a great multitude fled out of the country, some pushing as far as Iceland and colonizing it, some swarming

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to the Orkneys and Hebrides till Harald harried them out again and the sea-kings sailed southward to join Guthrum's host in the Rhine country or follow Rolf to his fights on the Seine. But little by little the land settled down into order, and the three Scandinavian realms gathered strength for new efforts which were to leave their mark on our after history.

England and its King.

But of the new danger which threatened it in this union of the north England knew little. The storm seemed to have drifted utterly away; and the land passed from a hundred years of ceaseless conflict into a time of peace. Here as elsewhere the Northman had failed in his purpose of conquest; but here as elsewhere he had done a mighty work. In shattering the empire of Charles the Great he had given birth to the nations of modern Europe. In his long strife with Englishmen he had created an English people. The national union which had been brought about for a moment by the sword of Ecgberht was a union of sheer force which broke down at the first blow of the sea-robbers. The black boats of the Northmen were so many wedges that split up the fabric of the roughly-built realm. But the very agency which destroyed the new England was destined to bring it back again, and to breathe into it a life that made its union real. The peoples who had so long looked on each other as enemies found themselves fronted by a common foe. They were thrown together by a common danger and the need of a common defence. Their common faith grew into a national bond as religion struggled hand in hand with England itself against the heathen of the north. They recognized a common king as a common struggle changed Ælfred and his sons from mere leaders of West Saxons into leaders of all Englishmen in their fight with the stranger. And when the work which Ælfred set his house to do was done, when the yoke of the Northman was lifted from the last of his conquests, Engle and Saxon, Northumbrian and Mercian, spent with the battle for a common freedom and a common country,

knew themselves in the hour of their deliverance as an English people.

The new people found its centre in the King. The heightening of the royal power was a direct outcome of the war. The dying out of other royal stocks left the house of Cerdic the one line of hereditary kingship. But it was the war with the Northmen that raised Ælfred and his sons from tribal leaders into national kings. The long series of triumphs which wrested the land from the stranger begot a new and universal loyalty; while the wider dominion which their success bequeathed removed the kings further and further from their people, lifted them higher and higher above the nobles, and clothed them more and more with a mysterious dignity. Above all the religious character of the war against the Northmen gave a religious character to the sovereigns who waged it. The king, if he was no longer sacred as the son of Woden, became yet more sacred as "the Lord's Anointed." By the very fact of his consecration he was pledged to a religious rule, to justice, mercy, and good government; but his "hallowing" invested him also with a power drawn not from the will of man or the assent of his subjects but from the will of God, and treason against him became the worst of crimes. Every reign lifted the sovereign higher in the social scale. The bishop, once ranked equal with him in value of life, sank to the level of the ealdorman. The ealdorman himself, once the hereditary ruler of a smaller state, became a mere delegate of the national king, with an authority curtailed in every shire by that of the royal shire-reeves, officers despatched to levy the royal revenues and to administer the royal justice. Among the later nobility of the thegns personal service with such a lord was held not to degrade but to ennoble. "Dish-thegn" and "bower-thegn," "house-thegn" and "horse-thegn" found themselves great officers of state; and the developement of politics, the wider extension of home and foreign affairs were already transforming these royal officers into a

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standing council or ministry for the transaction of the ordinary administrative business and the reception of judicial appeals. Such a ministry, composed of thegns or prelates nominated by the king, and constituting in itself a large part of the Witenagemote when that assembly was gathered for legislative purposes, drew the actual control of affairs more and more into the hands of the sovereign himself.

Growth of Feudalism.

But the king's power was still a personal power. He had to be everywhere and to see for himself that everything he willed was done. The royal claims lay still far ahead of the real strength of the Crown. There was a want of administrative machinery in actual connexion with the government, responsible to it, drawing its force directly from it, and working automatically in its name even in moments when the royal power was itself weak or wavering. The Crown was strong under a king who was strong, whose personal action was felt everywhere throughout the realm, whose dread lay on every reeve and ealdorman. But with a weak king the Crown was weak. Ealdormen, provincial witanagemotes, local jurisdictions, ceased to move at the royal bidding the moment the direct royal pressure was loosened or removed. Enfeebled as they were, the old provincial jealousies, the old tendency to severance and isolation lingered on and woke afresh when the Crown fell to a nerveless ruler or to a child. And at the moment we have reached the royal power and the national union it embodied had to battle with fresh tendencies towards national disintegration which sprang like itself from the struggle with the Northman. The tendency towards personal dependence and towards a social organization based on personal dependence received an overpowering impulse from the strife. The long insecurity of a century of warfare drove the ceorl, the free tiller of the soil, to seek protection more and more from the thegn beside him. The freeman "commended" himself to a lord who promised aid, and as the price of this shelter he surrendered his freehold to

receive it back as a fief laden with conditions of military service. The principle of personal allegiance which was embodied in the very notion of thegnhood, itself tended to widen into a theory of general dependence. From Ælfred's day it was assumed that no man could exist without a lord. The "lordless man" became a sort of outlaw in the realm. The free man, the very base of the older English constitution, died down more and more into the "villein," the man who did suit and service to a master, who followed him to the field, who looked to his court for justice, who rendered days of service in his demesne. The same tendencies drew the lesser thegns around the greater nobles, and these around the provincial ealdormen. The ealdormen had hardly been dwarfed into lieutenants of the national sovereign before they again began to rise into petty kings, and in the century which follows we see Mercian or Northumbrian thegns following a Mercian or Northumbrian ealdorman to the field though it were against the lord of the land. Even the constitutional forms which sprang from the old English freedom tended to invest the higher nobles with a commanding power. In the "great meeting" of the Witenagemote or Assembly of the Wise lay the rule of the realm. It represented the whole English people, as the wise-moots of each kingdom represented the separate peoples of each; and its powers were as supreme in the wider field as theirs in the narrower. It could elect or depose the King. To it belonged the higher justice, the imposition of taxes, the making of laws, the conclusion of treaties, the control of wars, the disposal of public lands, the appointment of great officers of state. But such a meeting necessarily differed greatly in constitution from the Witans of the lesser kingdoms. The individual freeman, save when the host was gathered together, could hardly take part in its deliberations. The only relic of its popular character lay at last in the ring of citizens who gathered round the Wise Men at London or Winchester, and shouted their

"aye" or "nay" at the election of a king. Distance and the hardships of travel made the presence of the lesser thegns as rare as that of the freemen; and the national council practically shrank into a gathering of the ealdormen, the bishops, and the officers of the crown.

Feudalism and the Monarchy.

The old English democracy had thus all but passed into an oligarchy of the narrowest kind. The feudal movement which in other lands was breaking up every nation into a mass of loosely-knit states with nobles at their head who owned little save a nominal allegiance to their king threatened to break up England itself. What hindered its triumph was the power of the Crown, and it is the story of this struggle between the monarchy and these tendencies to feudal isolation which fills the period between the death of Eadred and the conquest of the Norman. It was a struggle which England shared with the rest of the western world, but its issue here was a peculiar one. In other countries feudalism won an easy victory over the central government. In England alone the monarchy was strong enough to hold feudalism at bay. Powerful as he might be, the English ealdorman never succeeded in becoming really hereditary or independent of the Crown. Kings as weak as Æthelred could drive ealdormen into exile and could replace them by fresh nominees. If the Witenagemote enabled the great nobles to bring their power to bear directly on the Crown, it preserved at any rate a feeling of national unity and was forced to back the Crown against individual revolt. The Church too never became feudalized. The bishop clung to the Crown, and the bishop remained a great social and political power. As local in area as the ealdorman, for the province was his diocese and he sat by his side in the local Witenagemote, he furnished a standing check on the independence of the great nobles. But if feudalism proved too weak to conquer the monarchy, it was strong enough to paralyze its action. Neither of the two forces could master the other, but each could weaken the other, and throughout the whole period

of their conflict England lay a prey to disorder within and to insult from without.

The first sign of these troubles was seen when the death of Eadred in 955 handed over the realm to a child King, his nephew Eadwig. Eadwig was swayed by a woman of high lineage, Æthelgifu; and the quarrel between her and the older counsellors of Eadred broke into open strife at the coronation feast. On the young King's insolent withdrawal to her chamber Dunstan, at the bidding of the Witan, drew him roughly back to his seat. But the feast was no sooner ended than a sentence of outlawry drove the abbot over sea, while the triumph of Æthelgifu was crowned in 957 by the marriage of her daughter to the King and the spoliation of the monasteries which Dunstan had befriended. As the new Queen was Eadwig's kinswoman the religious opinion of the day regarded his marriage as incestuous, and it was followed by a revolution. At the opening of 958 Archbishop Odo parted the King from his wife by solemn sentence; while the Mercians and Northumbrians rose in revolt, proclaimed Eadwig's brother Eadgar their king, and recalled Dunstan. The death of Eadwig a few months later restored the unity of the realm; but his successor Eadgar was only a boy of fourteen and throughout his reign the actual direction of affairs lay in the hands of Dunstan, whose elevation to the see of Canterbury set him at the head of the Church as of the State. The noblest tribute to his rule lies in the silence of our chroniclers. His work indeed was a work of settlement, and such a work was best done by the simple enforcement of peace. During the years of rest in which the stern hand of the Primate enforced justice and order Northman and Englishman drew together into a single people. Their union was the result of no direct policy of fusion; on the contrary Dunstan's policy preserved to the conquered Danelagh its local rights and local usages. But he recognized the men of the Danelagh as Englishmen, he employed

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Northmen in the royal service, and promoted them to high posts in Church and State. For the rest he trusted to time, and time justified his trust. The fusion was marked by a memorable change in the name of the land. Slowly as the conquering tribes had learned to know themselves by the one national name of Englishmen, they learned yet more slowly to stamp their name on the land they had won. It was not till Eadgar's day that the name of Britain passed into the name of Engla-land, the land of Englishmen, England. The same vigorous rule which secured rest for the country during these years of national union told on the growth of material prosperity. Commerce sprang into a wider life. Its extension is seen in the complaint that men learned fierceness from the Saxon of Germany, effeminacy from the Fleming, and drunkenness from the Dane. The laws of Æthelred which provide for the protection and regulation of foreign trade only recognize a state of things which grew up under Eadgar. "Men of the Empire," traders of Lower Lorraine and the Rhine-land, "Men of Rouen," traders from the new Norman duchy of the Seine, were seen in the streets of London. It was in Eadgar's day indeed that London rose to the commercial greatness it has held ever since.

Eadward the Martyr.

Though Eadgar reigned for sixteen years, he was still in the prime of manhood when he died in 975. His death gave a fresh opening to the great nobles. He had bequeathed the Crown to his elder son Eadward; but the Ealdorman of East Anglia, Æthelwine, rose at once to set a younger child, Æthelred, on the throne. But the two primates of Canterbury and York who had joined in setting the crown on the head of Eadgar now joined in setting it on the head of Eadward, and Dunstan remained as before master of the realm. The boy's reign however was troubled by strife between the monastic party and their opponents till in 979 the quarrel was cut short by his murder at Corfe, and with the accession of Æthelred, the

power of Dunstan made way for that of Ealdorman Æthelwine and the Queen-mother. Some years of tranquillity followed this victory; but though Æthelwine preserved order at home he showed little sense of the danger which threatened from abroad. The North was girding itself for a fresh onset on England. The Scandinavian peoples had drawn together into their kingdoms of Denmark, Sweden, and Norway; and it was no longer in isolated bands but in national hosts that they were about to seek conquests in the South. As Æthelred drew to manhood some chance descents on the coast told of this fresh stir in the North, and the usual result of the Northman's presence was seen in new risings among the Welsh.

Æthelred.

In 991 Ealdorman Brihtnoth of East Anglia fell in battle with a Norwegian force at Maldon, and the withdrawal of the pirates had to be bought by money. Æthelwine too died at this moment, and the death of the two Ealdormen left Æthelred free to act as King. But his aim was rather to save the Crown from his nobles than England from the Northmen. Handsome and pleasant of address, the young King's pride showed itself in a string of imperial titles, and his restless and self-confident temper drove him to push the pretensions of the Crown to their furthest extent. His aim throughout his reign was to free himself from the dictation of the great nobles, and it was his indifference to their "rede" or counsel that won him the name of "Æthelred the Redeless." From the first he struck boldly at his foes, and Ælfgar, the Ealdorman of Mercia, whom the death of his rival Æthelwine left supreme in the realm, was driven by the King's hate to desert to a Danish force which he was sent in 992 to drive from the coast. Æthelred turned from his triumph at home to meet the forces of the Danish and Norwegian Kings, Swegen and Olaf, which anchored off London in 994. His policy throughout was a policy of diplomacy rather than of arms, and a treaty of subsidy gave time for intrigues

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which parted the invaders till troubles at home drew both again to the North. Æthelred took quick advantage of his success at home and abroad; the place of the great ealdormen in the royal councils was taken by court-thegns, in whom we see the rudiments of a ministry, while the King's fleet attacked the pirates' haunts in Cumberland and the Cotentin. But in spite of all this activity the news of a fresh invasion found England more weak and broken than ever. The rise of the "new men" only widened the breach between the court and the great nobles, and their resentment showed itself in delays which foiled every attempt of Æthelred to meet the pirate-bands who still clung to the coast.

Swegen.

They came probably from the other side of the Channel, and it was to clear them away as well as secure himself against Swegen's threatened descent that Æthelred took a step which brought England in contact with a land over-sea. Normandy, where the Northmen had settled a hundred years before, was now growing into a great power, and it was to win the friendship of Normandy and to close its harbours against Swegen that Æthelred in 1002 took the Norman Duke's daughter, Emma, to wife. The same dread of invasion gave birth to a panic of treason from the Northern mercenaries whom the King had drawn to settle in the land as a fighting force against their brethren; and an order of Æthelred brought about a general massacre of them on St. Brice's day. Wedding and murder however proved feeble defences against Swegen. His fleet reached the coast in 1003, and for four years he marched through the length and breadth of Southern and Eastern England, "lighting his war-beacons as he went" in blazing homestead and town. Then for a heavy bribe he withdrew, to prepare for a later and more terrible onset. But there was no rest for the realm. The fiercest of the Norwegian jarls took his place, and from Wessex the war extended over Mercia and East Anglia. In 1012 Canterbury was taken and sacked, Ælfheah the Archbishop dragged to Greenwich,

and there in default of ransom brutally slain. The Danes set him in the midst of their husting, pelting him with bones and skulls of oxen, till one more pitiful than the rest clove his head with an axe. Meanwhile the court was torn with intrigue and strife, with quarrels between the court-thegns in their greed of power and yet fiercer quarrels between these favourites and the nobles whom they superseded in the royal councils. The King's policy of finding aid among his new ministers broke down when these became themselves ealdormen. With their local position they took up the feudal claims of independence; and Eadric, whom Æthelred raised to be Ealdorman of Mercia, became a power that overawed the Crown. In this paralysis of the central authority all organization and union was lost. "Shire would not help other" when Swegen returned in 1013. The war was terrible but short. Everywhere the country was pitilessly harried, churches plundered, men slaughtered. But, with the one exception of London, there was no attempt at resistance. Oxford and Winchester flung open their gates. The thegns of Wessex submitted to the Northmen at Bath. Even London was forced at last to give way, and Æthelred fled over-sea to a refuge in Normandy.

Cnut.

He was soon called back again. In the opening of 1014 Swegen died suddenly at Gainsborough; and the spell of terror was broken. The Witan recalled "their own born lord," and Æthelred returned to see the Danish fleet under Swegen's son, Cnut, sail away to the North. It was but to plan a more terrible return. Youth of nineteen as he was, Cnut showed from the first the vigour of his temper. Setting aside his brother he made himself King of Denmark; and at once gathered a splendid fleet for a fresh attack on England, whose King and nobles were again at strife, and where a bitter quarrel between Ealdorman Eadric of Mercia and Æthelred's son Eadmund Ironside broke the strength of the realm. The desertion of Eadric to Cnut as soon as he appeared off the coast threw open

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England to his arms; Wessex and Mercia submitted to him; and though the loyalty of London enabled Eadmund, when his father's death raised him in 1016 to the throne, to struggle bravely for a few months against the Danes, a decisive overthrow at Assandun and a treaty of partition which this wrested from him at Olney were soon followed by the young King's death. Cnut was left master of the realm. His first acts of government showed little but the temper of the mere Northman, passionate, revengeful, uniting the guile of the savage with his thirst for blood. Eadric of Mercia, whose aid had given him the Crown, was felled by an axe-blow at the King's signal; a murder removed Eadwig, the brother of Eadmund Ironside, while the children of Eadmund were hunted even into Hungary by his ruthless hate. But from a savage such as this the young conqueror rose abruptly into a wise and temperate king. His aim during twenty years seems to have been to obliterate from men's minds the foreign character of his rule and the bloodshed in which it had begun.

Conqueror indeed as he was, the Dane was no foreigner in the sense that the Norman was a foreigner after him. His language differed little from the English tongue. He brought in no new system of tenure or government. Cnut ruled in fact not as a foreign conqueror but as a native king. He dismissed his Danish host, and retaining only a trained band of household troops or "hus-carles" to serve as a body-guard relied boldly for support within his realm on the justice and good government he secured it. He fell back on "Eadgar's Law," on the old constitution of the realm, for his rule of government; and owned no difference between Dane and Englishman among his subjects. He identified himself even with the patriotism which had withstood the stranger. The Church had been the centre of the national resistance; Archbishop Ælfheah had been slain by Danish hands. But Cnut sought the friendship of the Church; he translated

Ælfheah's body with great pomp to Canterbury; he atoned for his father's ravages by gifts to the religious houses; he protected English pilgrims even against the robber-lords of the Alps. His love for monks broke out in a song which he composed as he listened to their chaunt at Ely. "Merrily sang the monks of Ely when Cnut King rowed by" across the vast fen-waters that surrounded their abbey. "Row, boatmen, near the land, and hear we these monks sing." A letter which Cnut wrote after twelve years of rule to his English subjects marks the grandeur of his character and the noble conception he had formed of kingship. "I have vowed to God to lead a right life in all things," wrote the King, "to rule justly and piously my realms and subjects, and to administer just judgement to all. If heretofore I have done aught beyond what was just, through headiness or negligence of youth, I am ready, with God's help, to amend it utterly." No royal officer, either for fear of the King or for favour of any, is to consent to injustice, none is to do wrong to rich or poor "as they would value my friendship and their own well-being." He especially denounces unfair exactions: "I have no need that money be heaped together for me by unjust demands." "I have sent this letter before me," Cnut ends, "that all the people of my realm may rejoice in my well-doing; for as you yourselves know, never have I spared, nor will I spare, to spend myself and my toil in what is needful and good for my people."

Cnut and Scotland.

Cnut's greatest gift to his people was that of peace. With him began the long internal tranquillity which was from this time to be the key-note of the national history. Without, the Dane was no longer a terror; on the contrary it was English ships and English soldiers who now appeared in the North and followed Cnut in his campaigns against Wend or Norwegian. Within, the exhaustion which follows a long anarchy gave fresh strength to the Crown, and Cnut's own ruling temper was backed by the force of hus-carles at his disposal. The four Earls of

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Northumberland, Mercia, Wessex, and East Anglia, whom he set in the place of the older ealdormen, knew themselves to be the creatures of his will; the ablest indeed of their number, Godwine, Earl of Wessex, was the minister or close counsellor of the King. The troubles along the Northern border were ended by a memorable act of policy. From Eadgar's day the Scots had pressed further and further across the Firth of Forth till a victory of their King Malcolm over Earl Eadwulf at Carham in 1018 made him master of Northern Northumbria. In 1031 Cnut advanced to the North, but the quarrel ended in a formal cession of the district between the Forth and the Tweed, Lothian as it was called, to the Scot-King on his doing homage to Cnut. The gain told at once on the character of the Northern kingdom. The Kings of the Scots had till now been rulers simply of Gaelic and Celtic peoples; but from the moment that Lothian with its English farmers and English seamen became a part of their dominions it became the most important part. The Kings fixed their seat at Edinburgh, and in the midst of an English population passed from Gaelic chieftains into the Saxon rulers of a mingled people.

Cnut's Sons.

But the greatness of Cnut's rule hung solely on the greatness of his temper, and the Danish power was shaken by his death in 1035. The empire he had built up at once fell to pieces. He had bequeathed both England and Denmark to his son Harthacnut; but the boy's absence enabled his brother, Harold Harefoot, to acquire all England save Godwine's earldom of Wessex, and in the end even Godwine was forced to submit to him. Harold's death in 1040 averted a conflict between the brothers, and placed Harthacnut quietly on the throne. But the love which Cnut's justice had won turned to hatred before the lawlessness of his successors. The long peace sickened men of their bloodshed and violence. "Never was a bloodier deed done in the land since the Danes came," ran a popular song, when Harold's men seized Ælfred,

a brother of Eadmund Ironside, who returned to England from Normandy where he had found a refuge since his father's flight to its shores. Every tenth man among his followers was killed, the rest sold for slaves, and Ælfred's eyes torn out at Ely. Harthacnut, more savage than his predecessor, dug up his brother's body and flung it into a marsh; while a rising at Worcester against his huscarles was punished by the burning of the town and the pillage of the shire. The young King's death was no less brutal than his life; in 1042 "he died as he stood at his drink in the house of Osgod Clapa at Lambeth." England wearied of rulers such as these: but their crimes helped her to free herself from the impossible dream of Cnut. The North, still more barbarous than herself, could give her no new element of progress or civilization. It was the consciousness of this and a hatred of rulers such as Harold and Harthacnut which co-operated with the old feeling of reverence for the past in calling back the line of Ælfred to the throne.

Eadward the Confessor.

It is in such transitional moments of a nation's history that it needs the cool prudence, the sensitive selfishness, the quick perception of what is possible, which distinguished the adroit politician whom the death of Cnut left supreme in England. Originally of obscure origin, Godwine's ability had raised him high in the royal favour; he was allied to Cnut by marriage, entrusted by him with the earldom of Wessex, and at last made the Viceroy or justiciar of the King in the government of the realm. In the wars of Scandinavia he had shown courage and skill at the head of a body of English troops, but his true field of action lay at home. Shrewd, eloquent, an active administrator, Godwine united vigilance, industry, and caution with a singular dexterity in the management of men. During the troubled years that followed the death of Cnut he did his best to continue his master's policy in securing the internal union of England under a Danish sovereign and in preserving her connexion with the North. But at

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the death of Harthacnut Cnut's policy had become impossible, and abandoning the Danish cause Godwine drifted with the tide of popular feeling which called Eadward, the one living son of Æthelred, to the throne. Eadward had lived from his youth in exile at the court of Normandy. A halo of tenderness spread in after-time round this last King of the old English stock; legends told of his pious simplicity, his blitheness and gentleness of mood, the holiness that gained him his name of "Confessor" and enshrined him as a Saint in his abbey-church at Westminster. Gleemen sang in manlier tones of the long peace and glories of his reign, how warriors and wise counsellors stood round his throne, and Welsh and Scot and Briton obeyed him. His was the one figure that stood out bright against the darkness when England lay trodden under foot by Norman conquerors; and so dear became his memory that liberty and independence itself seemed incarnate in his name. Instead of freedom, the subjects of William or Henry called for the "good laws of Eadward the Confessor." But it was as a mere shadow of the past that the exile really returned to the throne of Ælfred; there was something shadow-like in his thin form, his delicate complexion, his transparent womanly hands; and it is almost as a shadow that he glides over the political stage. The work of government was done by sterner hands.

Godwine.

Throughout his earlier reign, in fact, England lay in the hands of its three Earls, Siward of Northumbria, Leofric of Mercia, and Godwine of Wessex, and it seemed as if the feudal tendency to provincial separation against which Æthelred had struggled was to triumph with the death of Cnut. What hindered this severance was the greed of Godwine. Siward was isolated in the North: Leofric's earldom was but a fragment of Mercia. But the Earl of Wessex, already master of the wealthiest part of England, seized district after district for his house. His son Swegen secured an earldom in the south-west; his son Harold became Earl of East Anglia; his nephew Beorn was

established in Central England: while the marriage of his daughter Eadgyth to the King himself gave Godwine a hold upon the throne. Policy led the Earl, as it led his son, rather to aim at winning England itself than at breaking up England to win a mere fief in it. But his aim found a sudden check through the lawlessness of his son Swegen. Swegen seduced the abbess of Leominster, sent her home again with a yet more outrageous demand of her hand in marriage, and on the King's refusal to grant it fled from the realm. Godwine's influence secured his pardon, but on his very return to seek it Swegen murdered his cousin Beorn who had opposed the reconciliation and again fled to Flanders. A storm of national indignation followed him over-sea. The meeting of the Wise men branded him as "nithing," the "utterly worthless," yet in a year his father wrested a new pardon from the King and restored him to his earldom. The scandalous inlawing of such a criminal left Godwine alone in a struggle which soon arose with Eadward himself. The King was a stranger in his realm, and his sympathies lay naturally with the home and friends of his youth and exile. He spoke the Norman tongue. He used in Norman fashion a seal for his charters. He set Norman favourites in the highest posts of Church and State. Foreigners such as these, though hostile to the minister, were powerless against Godwine's influence and ability, and when at a later time they ventured to stand alone against him they fell without a blow. But the general ill-will at Swegen's inlawing enabled them to stir Eadward to attack the Earl, and in 1051 a trivial quarrel brought the opportunity of a decisive break with him. On his return from a visit to the court Eustace, Count of Boulogne, the husband of the King's sister, demanded quarters for his train in Dover. Strife arose, and many both of the burghers and foreigners were slain. All Godwine's better nature withstood Eadward when the King angrily bade him exact vengeance from the town for the affront of his kinsman;

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and he claimed a fair trial for the townsmen. But Eadward looked on his refusal as an outrage, and the quarrel widened into open strife. Godwine at once gathered his forces and marched upon Gloucester, demanding the expulsion of the foreign favourites. But even in a just quarrel the country was cold in his support. The Earls of Mercia and Northumberland united their forces to those of Eadward at Gloucester, and marched with the King to a gathering of the Witenagemote at London. Godwine again appeared in arms, but Swegen's outlawry was renewed, and the Earl of Wessex, declining with his usual prudence a useless struggle, withdrew over-sea to Flanders.

Harold.

But the wrath of the nation was appeased by his fall. Great as were Godwine's faults, he was the one man who now stood between England and the rule of the strangers who flocked to the Court; and a year had hardly passed when he was strong enough to return. At the appearance of his fleet in the Thames in 1052 Eadward was once more forced to yield. The foreign prelates and bishops fled over-sea, outlawed by the same meeting of the Wise men which restored Godwine to his home. But he returned only to die, and the direction of affairs passed quietly to his son Harold. Harold came to power unfettered by the obstacles which beset his father, and for twelve years he was the actual governor of the realm. The courage, the ability, the genius for administration, the ambition and subtlety of Godwine were found again in his son. In the internal government of England he followed out his father's policy while avoiding its excesses. Peace was preserved, justice administered, and the realm increased in wealth and prosperity. Its gold work and embroidery became famous in the markets of Flanders and France. Disturbances from without were crushed sternly and rapidly; Harold's military talents displayed themselves in a campaign against Wales, and in the boldness and rapidity with which, arming his troops with weapons

adapted for mountain conflict, he penetrated to the heart of its fastnesses and reduced the country to complete submission. With the gift of the Northumbrian earldom on Siward's death to his brother Tostig all England save a small part of the older Mercia lay in the hands of the house of Godwine, and as the waning health of the King, the death of his nephew, the son of Eadmund who had returned from Hungary as his heir, and the childhood of the Ætheling Eadgar who stood next in blood, removed obstacle after obstacle to his plans, Harold patiently but steadily moved forward to the throne.

Normandy.

But his advance was watched by one even more able and ambitious than himself. For the last half century England had been drawing nearer to the Norman land which fronted it across the Channel. As we pass now-a-days through Normandy, it is English history which is round about us. The name of hamlet after hamlet has memories for English ears; a fragment of castle wall marks the home of the Bruce, a tiny village preserves the name of the Percy The very look of the country and its people seem familiar to us; the Norman peasant in his cap and blouse recalls the build and features of the small English farmer; the fields about Caen, with their dense hedgerows, their elms, their apple-orchards, are the very picture of an English country-side. Huge cathedrals lift themselves over the red-tiled roofs of little market towns, the models of stately fabrics which superseded the lowlier churches of Ælfred or Dunstan, while the windy heights that look over orchard and meadowland are crowned with the square grey keeps which Normandy gave to the cliffs of Richmond and the banks of Thames. It was Rolf the Ganger, or Walker, a pirate leader like Guthrum or Hasting, who wrested this land from the French king, Charles the Simple, in 912, at the moment when Ælfred's children were beginning their conquest of the English Danelagh. The treaty of Clair-on-Epte in which France purchased peace by this cession of the coast was a close imitation of the Peace of Wedmore.

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Rolf, like Guthrum, was baptized, received the King's daughter in marriage, and became his vassal for the territory which now took the name of "the Northman's land" or Normandy. But vassalage and the new faith sat lightly on the Dane. No such ties of blood and speech tended to unite the Northman with the French among whom he settled along the Seine as united him to the Englishmen among whom he settled along the Humber. William Longsword, the son of Rolf, though wavering towards France and Christianity, remained a Northman in heart; he called in a Danish colony to occupy his conquest of the Cotentin, the peninsula which runs out from St. Michael's Mount to the cliffs of Cherbourg, and reared his boy among the Northmen of Bayeux where the Danish tongue and fashions most stubbornly held their own. A heathen reaction followed his death, and the bulk of the Normans, with the child Duke Richard, fell away for the time from Christianity, while new pirate-fleets came swarming up the Seine. To the close of the century the whole people were still "Pirates" to the French around them, their land the "Pirates' land," their Duke the "Pirates' Duke." Yet in the end the same forces which merged the Dane in the Englishman told even more powerfully on the Dane in France. No race has ever shown a greater power of absorbing all the nobler characteristics of the peoples with whom they came in contact, or of infusing their own energy into them. During the long reign of Duke Richard the Fearless, the son of William Longsword, a reign which lasted from 945 to 996, the heathen Northmen pirates became French Christians and feudal at heart. The old Norse language lived only at Bayeux and in a few local names. As the old Northern freedom died silently away, the descendants of the pirates became feudal nobles and the "Pirates' land" sank into the most loyal of the fiefs of France.

Duke William.

From the moment of their settlement on the Frankish coast, the Normans had been jealously watched by the

English kings; and the anxiety of Æthelred for their friendship set a Norman woman on the English throne. The marriage of Emma with Æthelred brought about a close political connexion between the two countries. It was in Normandy that the King found a refuge from Swegen's invasion, and his younger boys grew up in exile at the Norman court. Their presence there drew the eyes of every Norman to the rich land which offered so tempting a prey across the Channel. The energy which they had shown in winning their land from the Franks, in absorbing the French civilization and the French religion, was now showing itself in adventures on far-off shores, in crusades against the Moslem of Spain or the Arabs of Sicily. It was this spirit of adventure that roused the Norman Duke Robert to sail against England in Cnut's day under pretext of setting Æthelred's children on its throne, but the wreck of his fleet in a storm put an end to a project which might have anticipated the work of his son. It was that son, William the Great, as men of his own day styled him, William the Conqueror as he was to stamp himself by one event on English history, who was now Duke of Normandy. The full grandeur of his indomitable will, his large and patient statesmanship, the loftiness of aim which lifts him out of the petty incidents of his age, were as yet only partly disclosed. But there never had been a moment from his boyhood when he was not among the greatest of men. His life from the very first was one long mastering of difficulty after difficulty. The shame of his birth remained in his name of "the Bastard." His father Robert had seen Arlotta, a tanner's daughter of the town, as she washed her linen in a little brook by Falaise; and loving her he had made her the mother of his boy. The departure of Robert on a pilgrimage from which he never returned left William a child-ruler among the most turbulent baronage in Christendom; treason and anarchy surrounded him as he grew to manhood; and disorder broke at last into open revolt. But in

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1047 a fierce combat of horse on the slopes of Val-es-dunes beside Caen left the young Duke master of his duchy and he soon made his mastery felt. "Normans" said a Norman poet "must be trodden down and kept under foot, for he only that bridles them may use them at his need." In the stern order he forced on the land Normandy from this hour felt the bridle of its Duke.

William and France.

Secure at home, William seized the moment of Godwine's exile to visit England, and received from his cousin, King Eadward, as he afterwards asserted, a promise of succession to his throne. Such a promise however, unconfirmed by the Witenagemote, was valueless; and the return of Godwine must have at once cut short the young Duke's hopes. He found in fact work enough to do in his own duchy, for the discontent of his baronage at the stern justice of his rule found support in the jealousy which his power raised in the states around him, and it was only after two great victories at Mortemer and Varaville and six years of hard fighting that outer and inner foes were alike trodden under foot. In 1060 William stood first among the princes of France. Maine submitted to his rule. Britanny was reduced to obedience by a single march. While some of the rebel barons rotted in the Duke's dungeons and some were driven into exile, the land settled down into a peace which gave room for a quick upgrowth of wealth and culture. Learning and education found their centre in the school of Bec, which the teaching of a Lombard scholar, Lanfranc, raised in a few years into the most famous school of Christendom. Lanfranc's first contact with William, if it showed the Duke's imperious temper, showed too his marvellous insight into men. In a strife with the Papacy which William provoked by his marriage with Matilda, a daughter of the Count of Flanders, Lanfranc took the side of Rome. His opposition was met by a sentence of banishment, and the Prior had hardly set out on a lame horse, the only one his house could afford, when he was overtaken by the Duke, impatient that he should

quit Normandy. "Give me a better horse and I shall go the quicker," replied the imperturbable Lombard, and William's wrath passed into laughter and good will. From that hour Lanfranc became his minister and counsellor, whether for affairs in the duchy itself or for the more daring schemes of ambition which opened up across the Channel.

William and England.

William's hopes of the English crown are said to have been revived by a storm which threw Harold, while cruising in the Channel, on the coast of Ponthieu. Its count sold him to the Duke; and as the price of return to England William forced him to swear on the relics of saints to support his claim to its throne. But, true or no, the oath told little on Harold's course. As the childless King drew to his grave one obstacle after another was cleared from the Earl's path. His brother Tostig had become his most dangerous rival; but a revolt of the Northumbrians drove Tostig to Flanders, and the Earl was able to win over the Mercian house of Leofric to his cause by owning Morkere, the brother of the Mercian Earl Eadwine, as his brother's successor. His aim was in fact attained without a struggle. In the opening of 1066 the nobles and bishops who gathered round the death-bed of the Confessor passed quietly from it to the election and coronation of Harold. But at Rouen the news was welcomed with a burst of furious passion, and the Duke of Normandy at once prepared to enforce his claim by arms. William did not claim the Crown. He claimed simply the right which he afterwards used when his sword had won it of presenting himself for election by the nation, and he believed himself entitled so to present himself by the direct commendation of the Confessor. The actual election of Harold which stood in his way, hurried as it was, he did not recognize as valid. But with this constitutional claim was inextricably mingled resentment at the private wrong which Harold had done him, and a resolve to exact vengeance on the man whom he regarded as

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untrue to his oath. The difficulties in the way of his enterprize were indeed enormous. He could reckon on no support within England itself. At home he had to extort the consent of his own reluctant baronage; to gather a motley host from every quarter of France and to keep it together for months; to create a fleet, to cut down the very trees, to build, to launch, to man the vessels; and to find time amidst all this for the common business of government, for negotiations with Denmark and the Empire, with France, Britanny, and Anjou, with Flanders and with Rome which had been estranged from England by Archbishop Stigand's acceptance of his pallium from one who was not owned as a canonical Pope.

Stamford Bridge.

But his rival's difficulties were hardly less than his own. Harold was threatened with invasion not only by William but by his brother Tostig, who had taken refuge in Norway and secured the aid of its King, Harald Hardrada. The fleet and army he had gathered lay watching for months along the coast. His one standing force was his body of hus-carles, but their numbers only enabled them to act as the nucleus of an army. On the other hand the Land-fyrd or general levy of fighting-men was a body easy to raise for any single encounter but hard to keep together. To assemble such a force was to bring labour to a standstill. The men gathered under the King's standard were the farmers and ploughmen of their fields. The ships were the fishing-vessels of the coast. In September the task of holding them together became impossible, but their dispersion had hardly taken place when the two clouds which had so long been gathering burst at once upon the realm. A change of wind released the landlocked armament of William; but before changing, the wind which prisoned the Duke brought the host of Tostig and Harald Hardrada to the coast of Yorkshire. The King hastened with his household troops to the north and repulsed the Norwegians in a decisive overthrow at Stamford Bridge, but ere he could hurry back to London the

Norman host had crossed the sea and William, who had anchored on the twenty-eighth of September off Pevensey, was ravaging the coast to bring his rival to an engagement. His merciless ravages succeeded in drawing Harold from London to the south; but the King wisely refused to attack with the troops he had hastily summoned to his banner. If he was forced to give battle, he resolved to give it on ground he had himself chosen, and advancing near enough to the coast to check William's ravages he entrenched himself on a hill known afterwards as that of Senlac, a low spur of the Sussex downs near Hastings. His position covered London and drove William to concentrate his forces. With a host subsisting by pillage, to concentrate is to starve; and no alternative was left to the Duke but a decisive victory or ruin.

Battle of Hastings.

On the fourteenth of October William led his men at dawn along the higher ground that leads from Hastings to the battle-field which Harold had chosen. From the mound of Telham the Normans saw the host of the English gathered thickly behind a rough trench and a stockade on the height of Senlac. Marshy ground covered their right; on the left, the most exposed part of the position, the huscarles or body-guard of Harold, men in full armour and wielding huge axes, were grouped round the Golden Dragon of Wessex and the Standard of the King. The rest of the ground was covered by thick masses of half-armed rustics who had flocked at Harold's summons to the fight with the stranger. It was against the centre of this formidable position that William arrayed his Norman knighthood, while the mercenary forces he had gathered in France and Britanny were ordered to attack its flanks. A general charge of the Norman foot opened the battle; in front rode the minstrel Taillefer, tossing his sword in the air and catching it again while he chaunted the song of Roland. He was the first of the host who struck a blow, and he was the first to fall. The charge broke vainly on the stout stockade behind which the English warriors plied

axe and javelin with fierce cries of "Out, out," and the repulse of the Norman footmen was followed by a repulse of the Norman horse. Again and again the Duke rallied and led them to the fatal stockade. All the fury of fight that glowed in his Norseman's blood, all the headlong valour that spurred him over the slopes of Val-ès-dunes, mingled that day with the coolness of head, the dogged perseverance, the inexhaustible faculty of resource which shone at Mortemer and Varaville. His Breton troops, entangled in the marshy ground on his left, broke in disorder, and as panic spread through the army a cry arose that the Duke was slain. William tore off his helmet; "I live," he shouted, "and by God's help I will conquer yet." Maddened by a fresh repulse, the Duke spurred right at the Standard; unhorsed, his terrible mace struck down Gyrth, the King's brother; again dismounted, a blow from his hand hurled to the ground an unmannerly rider who would not lend him his steed. Amidst the roar and tumult of the battle he turned the flight he had arrested into the means of victory. Broken as the stockade was by his desperate onset, the shield-wall of the warriors behind it still held the Normans at bay till William by a feint of flight drew a part of the English force from their post of vantage. Turning on his disorderly pursuers, the Duke cut them to pieces, broke through the abandoned line, and made himself master of the central ground. Meanwhile the French and Bretons made good their ascent on either flank. At three the hill seemed won, at six the fight still raged around the Standard where Harold's hus-carles stood stubbornly at bay on a spot marked afterwards by the high altar of Battle Abbey. An order from the Duke at last brought his archers to the front. Their arrow-flight told heavily on the dense masses crowded around the King and as the sun went down a shaft pierced Harold's right eye. He fell between the royal ensigns, and the battle closed with a desperate melly over his corpse.

Night covered the flight of the English army: but William was quick to reap the advantage of his victory. Securing Romney and Dover, he marched by Canterbury upon London. Faction and intrigue were doing his work for him as he advanced; for Harold's brothers had fallen with the King on the field of Senlac, and there was none of the house of Godwine to contest the crown. Of the old royal line there remained but a single boy, Eadgar the Ætheling. He was chosen King; but the choice gave little strength to the national cause. The widow of the Confessor surrendered Winchester to the Duke. The bishops gathered at London inclined to submission. The citizens themselves faltered as William, passing by their walls, gave Southwark to the flames. The throne of the boy-king really rested for support on the Earls of Mercia and Northumbria, Eadwine and Morkere; and William, crossing the Thames at Wallingford and marching into Hertfordshire, threatened to cut them off from their earldoms. The masterly movement forced the Earls to hurry home, and London gave way at once. Eadgar himself was at the head of the deputation who came to offer the crown to the Norman Duke. "They bowed to him," says the English annalist, pathetically, "for need." They bowed to the Norman as they had bowed to the Dane, and William accepted the crown in the spirit of Cnut. London indeed was secured by the erection of a fortress which afterwards grew into the Tower, but William desired to reign not as a conqueror but as a lawful king. At Christmas he received the crown at Westminster from the hands of Archbishop Ealdred amid shouts of "Yea, Yea," from his new English subjects. Fines from the greater landowners atoned for a resistance which now counted as rebellion; but with this exception every measure of the new sovereign showed his desire of ruling as a successor of Eadward or Ælfred. As yet indeed the greater part of England remained quietly aloof from him, and he can hardly be said to have been recognized as king

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by Northumberland or the greater part of Mercia. But to the east of a line which stretched from Norwich to Dorsetshire his rule was unquestioned, and over this portion he ruled as an English king. His soldiers were kept in strict order. No change was made in law or custom. The privileges of London were recognized by a royal writ which still remains, the most venerable of its muniments, among the city's archives. Peace and order were restored. William even attempted, though in vain, to learn the English tongue that he might personally administer justice to the suitors in his court. The kingdom seemed so tranquil that only a few months had passed after the battle of Senlac when leaving England in charge of his brother, Odo Bishop of Bayeux, and his minister, William Fitz-Osbern, the King returned in 1067 for a while to Normandy. The peace he left was soon indeed disturbed. Bishop Odo's tyranny forced the Kentishmen to seek aid from Count Eustace of Boulogne; while the Welsh princes supported a similar rising against Norman oppression in the west. But as yet the bulk of the land held fairly to the new king. Dover was saved from Eustace; and the discontented fled over sea to seek refuge in lands as far off as Constantinople, where Englishmen from this time formed great part of the body-guard or Varangians of the Eastern Emperors. William returned to take his place again as an English King. It was with an English force that he subdued a rising in the south-west with Exeter at its head, and it was at the head of an English army that he completed his work by marching to the North. His march brought Eadwine and Morkere again to submission; a fresh rising ended in the occupation of York, and England as far as the Tees lay quietly at William's feet.

The Norman Conquest.

It was in fact only the national revolt of 1068 that transformed the King into a conqueror. The signal for this revolt came from Swegen, King of Denmark, who had for two years past been preparing to dispute England with the Norman, but on the appearance of his fleet in the Humber all northern, all western and south-western

England rose as one man. Eadgar the Ætheling with a band of exiles who had found refuge in Scotland took the head of the Northumbrian revolt; in the south-west the men of Devon, Somerset, and Dorset gathered to the sieges of Exeter and Montacute; while a new Norman castle at Shrewsbury alone bridled a rising in the West. So ably had the revolt been planned that even William was taken by surprize. The outbreak was heralded by a storm of York and the slaughter of three thousand Normans who formed its garrison. The news of this slaughter reached William as he was hunting in the forest of Dean; and in a wild outburst of wrath he swore "by the splendour of God" to avenge himself on the North. But wrath went hand in hand with the coolest statesmanship. The centre of resistance lay in the Danish fleet, and pushing rapidly to the Humber with a handful of horsemen William bought at a heavy price its inactivity and withdrawal. Then turning westward with the troops that gathered round him he swept the Welsh border and relieved Shrewsbury while William Fitz-Osbern broke the rising around Exeter. His success set the King free to fulfil his oath of vengeance on the North. After a long delay before the flooded waters of the Aire he entered York and ravaged the whole country as far as the Tees. Town and village were harried and burned, their inhabitants were slain or driven over the Scottish border. The coast was especially wasted that no hold might remain for future landings of the Danes. Crops, cattle, the very implements of husbandry were so mercilessly destroyed that a famine which followed is said to have swept off more than a hundred thousand victims. Half a century later indeed the land still lay bare of culture and deserted of men for sixty miles northward of York. The work of vengeance once over, William led his army back from the Tees to York, and thence to Chester and the West. Never had he shown the grandeur of his character so memorably as in this terrible march. The winter was hard, the roads choked with snowdrifts or broken by

torrents, provisions failed; and his army, storm-beaten and forced to devour its horses for food, broke out into mutiny at the order to cross the bleak moorlands that part Yorkshire from the West. The mercenaries from Anjou and Britanny demanded their release from service. William granted their prayer with scorn. On foot, at the head of the troops which still clung to him, he forced his way by paths inaccessible to horses, often helping the men with his own hands to clear the road, and as the army descended upon Chester the resistance of the English died away.

For two years William was able to busy himself in castle-building and in measures for holding down the conquered land. How effective these were was seen when the last act of the conquest was reached. All hope of Danish aid was now gone, but Englishmen still looked for help to Scotland where Eadgar the Ætheling had again found refuge and where his sister Margaret had become wife of King Malcolm. It was probably some assurance of Malcolm's aid which roused the Mercian Earls, Eadwine and Morkere, to a fresh rising in 1071. But the revolt was at once foiled by the vigilance of the Conqueror. Eadwine fell in an obscure skirmish, while Morkere found shelter for a while in the fen country where a desperate band of patriots gathered round an outlawed leader, Hereward. Nowhere had William found so stubborn a resistance: but a causeway two miles long was at last driven across the marshes, and the last hopes of English freedom died in the surrender of Ely. It was as the unquestioned master of England that William marched to the North, crossed the Lowlands and the Forth, and saw Malcolm appear in his camp upon the Tay to swear fealty at his feet.

BOOK II.

ENGLAND UNDER FOREIGN KINGS.

1071—1214.

AUTHORITIES FOR BOOK II.

1071—1214.

Among the Norman chroniclers Orderic becomes from this point particularly valuable and detailed. The Chronicle and Florence of Worcester remain the primary English authorities, while Simeon of Durham gives much special information on northern matters. For the reign of William the Red the chief source of information is Eadmer, a monk of Canterbury, in his "Historia Novorum" and "Life of Anselm." William of Malmesbury and Henry of Huntingdon are both contemporary authorities during that of Henry the First; the latter remains a brief but accurate annalist; the former is the leader of a new historic school, who treat English events as part of the history of the world, and emulate classic models by a more philosophical arrangement of their materials. To these the opening of Stephen's reign adds the "Gesta Stephani," a record in great detail by one of the King's clerks, and the Hexham Chroniclers.

All this wealth of historical material however suddenly leaves us in the chaos of civil war. Even the Chronicle dies out in the midst of Stephen's reign, and the close at the same time of the works we have noted leaves a blank in our historical literature which extends over the early years of Henry the Second. But this dearth is followed by a vast outburst of historical industry. For the Beket struggle we have the mass of the Archbishop's own correspondence with that of Foliot and John of Salisbury. From 1169 to 1192 our primary authority is the Chronicle known as that of Benedict of Peterborough, whose authorship Professor Stubbs has shown to be more probably due to the royal treasurer, Bishop Richard Fitz-Neal. This is continued to 1201 by Roger of Howden in a record of equally official value. William of Newborough's history, which ends in 1198, is a work of the classical school, like William of Malmesbury's. It is distinguished by its fairness and good sense. To these may be added the Chronicle of Ralph Niger, with the additions of Ralph of Coggeshall, that of Gervais of Canterbury, and the interesting life of St. Hugh of Lincoln.

But the intellectual energy of Henry the Second's time is shown even more remarkably in the mass of general literature which lies behind these distinctively historical sources, in the treatises of John of Salisbury, the voluminous works of Giraldus Cambrensis, the

"Trifles" and satires of Walter Map, Glanvill's treatise on Law, Richard Fitz-Neal's "Dialogue on the Exchequer," to which we owe our knowlédge of Henry's financial system, the romances of Gaimar and of Wace, the poem of the San Graal. But this intellectual fertility is far from ceasing with Henry the Second. The thirteenth century has hardly begun when the romantic impulse quickens even the old English tongue in the long poem of Layamon. The Chronicle of Richard of Devizes and an "Itinerarium Regis" supplement Roger of Howden for Richard's reign. With John we enter upon the Annals of Barnwell and are aided by the invaluable series of the Chroniclers of St. Albans. Among the side topics of the time, we may find much information as to the Jews in Toovey's "Anglia Judaica"; the Chronicle of Jocelyn of Brakelond gives us a peep into social and monastic life; the Cistercian revival may be traced in the records of the Cistercian abbeys in Dugdale's Monasticon; the Charter Rolls give some information as to municipal history; and constitutional developement may be traced in the documents collected by Professor Stubbs in his "Select Charters."

CHAPTER I.

THE CONQUEROR.

1071—1085.

The Foreign Kings.

In the five hundred years that followed the landing of Hengest Britain had become England, and its conquest had ended in the settlement of its conquerors, in their conversion to Christianity, in the birth of a national literature, of an imperfect civilization, of a rough political order. But through the whole of this earlier age every attempt to fuse the various tribes of conquerors into a single nation had failed. The effort of Northumbria to extend her rule over all England had been foiled by the resistance of Mercia; that of Mercia by the resistance of Wessex. Wessex herself, even under the guidance of great kings and statesmen, had no sooner reduced the country to a seeming unity than local independence rose again at the call of the Northmen. The sense of a single England deepened with the pressure of the invaders; the monarchy of Ælfred and his house broadened into an English kingdom; but still tribal jealousies battled with national unity. Northumbrian lay apart from West-Saxon, Northman from Englishman. A common national sympathy held the country roughly together, but a real national union had yet to come. It came with foreign rule. The rule of the Danish kings broke local jealousies as they had never been broken before, and bequeathed a new England to Godwine and the Confessor. But Cnut was more Englishman than Northman, and his system of government was an English

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system. The true foreign yoke was only felt when England saw its conqueror in William the Norman.

For nearly a century and a half, from the hour when William turned triumphant from the fens of Ely to the hour when John fled defeated from Norman shores, our story is one of foreign masters. Kings from Normandy were followed by kings from Anjou. But whether under Norman or Angevin Englishmen were a subject race, conquered and ruled by men of strange blood and of strange speech. And yet it was in these years of subjection that England first became really England. Provincial differences were finally crushed into national unity by the pressure of the stranger. The firm government of her foreign kings secured the land a long and almost unbroken peace in which the new nation grew to a sense of its oneness, and this consciousness was strengthened by the political ability which in Henry the First gave it administrative order and in Henry the Second built up the fabric of its law. New elements of social life were developed alike by the suffering and the prosperity of the times. The wrong which had been done by the degradation of the free landowner into a feudal dependant was partially redressed by the degradation of the bulk of the English lords themselves into a middle class as they were pushed from their place by the foreign baronage who settled on English soil; and this social change was accompanied by a gradual enrichment and elevation of the class of servile and semi-servile cultivators which had lifted them at the close of this period into almost complete freedom. The middle-class which was thus created was reinforced by the upgrowth of a corresponding class in our towns. Commerce and trade were promoted by the justice and policy of the foreign kings; and with their advance rose the political importance of the trader. The boroughs of England, which at the opening of this period were for the most part mere villages, were rich enough at its close to buy liberty from the Crown and to stand ready for the

mightier part they were to play in the developement of our parliament. The shame of conquest, the oppression of the conquerors, begot a moral and religious revival which raised religion into a living thing; while the close connexion with the Continent which foreign conquest brought about secured for England a new communion with the artistic and intellectual life of the world without her.

William the Conqueror.

In a word, it is to the stern discipline of our foreign kings that we owe not merely English wealth and English freedom but England herself. And of these foreign masters the greatest was William of Normandy. In William the wild impulses of the Northman's blood mingled strangely with the cool temper of the modern statesman. As he was the last, so he was the most terrible outcome of the northern race. The very spirit of the sea-robbers from whom he sprang seemed embodied in his gigantic form, his enormous strength, his savage countenance, his desperate bravery, the fury of his wrath, the ruthlessness of his revenge. "No knight under Heaven," his enemies owned, "was William's peer." Boy as he was at Val-ès-dunes, horse and man went down before his lance. All the fierce gaiety of his nature broke out in the warfare of his youth, in his rout of fifteen Angevins with but five men at his back, in his defiant ride over the ground which Geoffry Martel claimed from him, a ride with hawk on fist as if war and the chase were one. No man could bend William's bow. His mace crashed its way through a ring of English warriors to the foot of the Standard. He rose to his greatest height at moments when other men despaired. His voice rang out as a trumpet when his soldiers fled before the English charge at Senlac, and his rally turned the flight into a means of victory. In his winter march on Chester he strode afoot at the head of his fainting troops and helped with his own hand to clear a road through the snowdrifts. And with the Northman's daring broke out the Northman's pitilessness. When the townsmen of Alençon hung raw hides along their walls

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in scorn of the "tanner's" grandson, William tore out his prisoners' eyes, hewed off their hands and feet, and flung them into the town. Hundreds of Hampshire men were driven from their homes to make him a hunting-ground and his harrying of Northumbria left Northern England a desolate waste. Of men's love or hate he recked little. His grim look, his pride, his silence, his wild outbursts of passion, left William lonely even in his court. His subjects trembled as he passed. "Stark man he was" writes the English chronicler "and great awe men had of him." His very wrath was solitary. "To no man spake he and no man dared speak to him" when the news reached him of Harold's seizure of the throne. It was only when he passed from his palace to the loneliness of the woods that the King's temper unbent. "He loved the wild deer as though he had been their father."

His rule.

It was the genius of William which lifted him out of this mere Northman into a great general and a great statesman. The wary strategy of his French campaigns, the organization of his attack upon England, the victory at Senlac, the quick resource, the steady perseverance which achieved the Conquest showed the wide range of his generalship. His political ability had shown itself from the first moment of his accession to the ducal throne. William had the instinct of government. He had hardly reached manhood when Normandy lay peaceful at his feet. Revolt was crushed. Disorder was trampled under foot. The Duke "could never love a robber," be he baron or knave. The sternness of his temper stamped itself throughout upon his rule. "Stark he was to men that withstood him," says the Chronicler of his English system of government; "so harsh and cruel was he that none dared withstand his will. Earls that did aught against his bidding he cast into bonds; bishops he stripped of their bishopricks, abbots of their abbacies. He spared not his own brother: first he was in the land, but the King cast him into bondage. If a man would live and hold his lands, need it were

he followed the King's will." Stern as such a rule was, its sternness gave rest to the land. Even amidst the sufferings which necessarily sprang from the circumstances of the Conquest itself, from the erection of castles or the enclosure of forests or the exactions which built up William's hoard at Winchester, Englishmen were unable to forget "the good peace he made in the land, so that a man might fare over his realm with a bosom full of gold." Strange touches too of a humanity far in advance of his age contrasted with this general temper of the Conqueror's government. One of the strongest traits in his character was an aversion to shed blood by process of law; he formally abolished the punishment of death, and only a single execution stains the annals of his reign. An edict yet more honourable to his humanity put an end to the slave-trade which had till then been carried on at the port of Bristol. The contrast between the ruthlessness and pitifulness of his public acts sprang indeed from a contrast within his temper itself. The pitiless warrior, the stern and aweful king was a tender and faithful husband, an affectionate father. The lonely silence of his bearing broke into gracious converse with pure and sacred souls like Anselm. If William was "stark" to rebel and baron, men noted that he was "mild to those that loved God."

William and feudalism.

But the greatness of the Conqueror was seen in more than the order and peace which he imposed upon the land. Fortune had given him one of the greatest opportunities ever offered to a king of stamping his own genius on the destinies of a people; and it is the way in which he seized on this opportunity which has set William among the foremost statesmen of the world. The struggle which ended in the fens of Ely had wholly changed his position. He no longer held the land merely as its national and elected King. To his elective right he added the right of conquest. It is the way in which William grasped and employed this double power that marks the originality of

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his political genius, for the system of government which he devized was in fact the result of this double origin of his rule. It represented neither the purely feudal system of the Continent nor the system of the older English royalty: more truly perhaps it may be said to have represented both. As the conqueror of England William developed the military organization of feudalism so far as was necessary for the secure possession of his conquests. The ground was already prepared for such an organization. We have watched the beginnings of English feudalism in the warriors, the "companions" or "thegns" who were personally attached to the king's war-band and received estates from the folkland in reward for their personal services. In later times this feudal distribution of estates had greatly increased as the bulk of the nobles followed the king's example and bound their tenants to themselves by a similar process of subinfeudation. The pure freeholders on the other hand, the class which formed the basis of the original English society, had been gradually reduced in number, partly through imitation of the class above them, but more through the pressure of the Danish wars and the social disturbance consequent upon them which forced these freemen to seek protectors among the thegns at the cost of their independence. Even before the reign of William therefore feudalism was superseding the older freedom in England as it had already superseded it in Germany or France. But the tendency was quickened and intensified by the Conquest. The desperate and universal resistance of the country forced William to hold by the sword what the sword had won; and an army strong enough to crush at any moment a national revolt was needful for the preservation of his throne. Such an army could only be maintained by a vast confiscation of the soil, and the failure of the English risings cleared the ground for its establishment. The greater part of the higher nobility fell in battle or fled into exile, while the lower thegnhood either forfeited the whole of their lands or redeemed a portion by the surrender of the rest.

We see the completeness of the confiscation in the vast estates which William was enabled to grant to his more powerful followers. Two hundred manors in Kent with more than an equal number elsewhere rewarded the services of his brother Odo, and grants almost as large fell to William's counsellors Fitz-Osbern and Montgomery or to barons like the Mowbrays and the Clares. But the poorest soldier of fortune found his part in the spoil. The meanest Norman rose to wealth and power in this new dominion of his lord. Great or small, each manor thus granted was granted on condition of its holder's service at the King's call; a whole army was by this means encamped upon the soil; and William's summons could at any hour gather an overwhelming force around his standard.

Such a force however, effective as it was against the conquered English, was hardly less formidable to the Crown itself. When once it was established, William found himself fronted in his new realm by a feudal baronage, by the men whom he had so hardly bent to his will in Normandy, and who were as impatient of law, as jealous of the royal power, as eager for an unbridled military and judicial independence within their own manors, here as there. The political genius of the Conqueror was shown in his appreciation of this danger and in the skill with which he met it. Large as the estates he granted were, they were scattered over the country in such a way as to render union between the great landowners or the hereditary attachment of great areas of population to any one separate lord equally impossible. A yet wiser measure struck at the very root of feudalism. When the larger holdings were divided by their owners into smaller subtenancies, the under-tenants were bound by the same conditions of service to their lord as he to the Crown. "Hear, my lord," swore the vassal as kneeling bareheaded and without arms he placed his hands within those of his superior, "I become liege man of yours for life and limb and earthly regard; and I will keep faith and loyalty to

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you for life and death, God help me!" Then the kiss of his lord invested him with land as a "fief" to descend to him and his heirs for ever. In other countries such a vassal owed fealty to his lord against all foes, be they king or no. By the usage however which William enacted in England each sub-tenant, in addition to his oath of fealty to his lord, swore fealty directly to the Crown, and loyalty to the King was thus established as the supreme and universal duty of all Englishmen.

William and England.

But the Conqueror's skill was shown not so much in these inner checks upon feudalism as in the counter-balancing forces which he provided without it. He was not only the head of the great garrison that held England down, he was legal and elected King of the English people. If as Conqueror he covered the country with a new military organization, as the successor of Eadward he maintained the judicial and administrative organization of the old English realm. At the danger of a severance of the land between the greater nobles he struck a final blow by the abolition of the four great earldoms. The shire became the largest unit of local government, and in each shire the royal nomination of sheriffs for its administration concentrated the whole executive power in the King's hands. The old legal constitution of the country gave him the whole judicial power, and William was jealous to retain and heighten this. While he preserved the local courts of the hundred and the shire he strengthened the jurisdiction of the King's Court, which seems even in the Confessor's day to have become more and more a court of highest appeal with a right to call up all cases from any lower jurisdiction to its bar. The control over the national revenue which had rested even in the most troubled times in the hands of the King was turned into a great financial power by the Conqueror's system. Over the whole face of the land a large part of the manors were burthened with special dues to the Crown: and it was for the purpose of ascertaining and recording

these that William sent into each county the commissioners whose enquiries are recorded in his Domesday Book. A jury empannelled in each hundred declared on oath the extent and nature of each estate, the names, number, and condition of its inhabitants, its value before and after the Conquest, and the sums due from it to the Crown. These, with the Danegeld or land-tax levied since the days of Æthelred, formed as yet the main financial resources of the Crown, and their exaction carried the royal authority in its most direct form home to every landowner. But to these were added a revenue drawn from the old Crown domain, now largely increased by the confiscations of the Conquest, the ever growing income from the judicial "fines" imposed by the King's judges in the King's courts, and the fees and redemptions paid to the Crown on the grant or renewal of every privilege or charter. A new source of revenue was found in the Jewish traders, many of whom followed William from Normandy, and who were glad to pay freely for the royal protection which enabled them to settle in their quarters or "Jewries" in all the principal towns of England.

The Church.

William found a yet stronger check on his baronage in the organization of the Church. Its old dependence on the royal power was strictly enforced. Prelates were practically chosen by the King. Homage was exacted from bishop as from baron. No royal tenant could be excommunicated save by the King's leave. No synod could legislate without his previous assent and subsequent confirmation of its decrees. No papal letters could be received within the realm save by his permission. The King firmly repudiated the claims which were beginning to be put forward by the court of Rome. When Gregory VII. called on him to do fealty for his kingdom the King sternly refused to admit the claim. "Fealty I have never willed to do, nor will I do it now. I have never promised it, nor do I find that my predecessors did it to yours." William's reforms only tended to tighten this hold of the

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Crown on the clergy. Stigand was deposed; and the elevation of Lanfranc to the see of Canterbury was followed by the removal of most of the English prelates and by the appointment of Norman ecclesiastics in their place. The new archbishop did much to restore discipline, and William's own efforts were no doubt partly directed by a real desire for the religious improvement of his realm. But the foreign origin of the new prelates cut them off from the flocks they ruled and bound them firmly to the foreign throne; while their independent position was lessened by a change which seemed intended to preserve it. Ecclesiastical cases had till now been decided, like civil cases, in shire or hundred-court, where the bishop sate side by side with ealdorman or sheriff. They were now withdrawn from it to the separate court of the bishop. The change was pregnant with future trouble to the Crown; but for the moment it told mainly in removing the bishop from his traditional contact with the popular assembly and in effacing the memory of the original equality of the religious with the civil power.

William's death.

In any struggle with feudalism a national king, secure of the support of the Church, and backed by the royal hoard at Winchester, stood in different case from the merely feudal sovereigns of the Continent. The difference of power was seen as soon as the Conquest was fairly over and the struggle which William had anticipated opened between the baronage and the Crown. The wisdom of his policy in the destruction of the great earldoms which had overshadowed the throne was shown in an attempt at their restoration made in 1075 by Roger, the son of his minister William Fitz-Osbern, and by the Breton, Ralf de Guader, whom the King had rewarded for his services at Senlac with the earldom of Norfolk. The rising was quickly suppressed, Roger thrown into prison, and Ralf driven over sea. The intrigues of the baronage soon found another leader in William's half-brother, the Bishop of Bayeux. Under pretence of aspiring by arms to the papacy Bishop Odo

collected money and men, but the treasure was at once seized by the royal officers and the Bishop arrested in the midst of the court. Even at the King's bidding no officer would venture to seize on a prelate of the Church; and it was with his own hands that William was forced to effect his arrest. The Conqueror was as successful against foes from without as against foes from within. The fear of the Danes, which had so long hung like a thunder-cloud over England, passed away before the host which William gathered in 1085 to meet a great armament assembled by King Cnut. A mutiny dispersed the Danish fleet, and the murder of its King removed all peril from the North. Scotland, already humbled by William's invasion, was bridled by the erection of a strong fortress at Newcastle-upon-Tyne; and after penetrating with his army to the heart of Wales the King commenced its systematic reduction by settling three of his great barons along its frontier. It was not till his closing years that William's unvarying success was troubled by a fresh outbreak of the Norman baronage under his son Robert and by an attack which he was forced to meet in 1087 from France. Its King mocked at the Conqueror's unwieldy bulk and at the sickness which bound him to his bed at Rouen. "King William has as long a lying-in," laughed Philip, "as a woman behind her curtains." "When I get up," William swore grimly, "I will go to mass in Philip's-land and bring a rich offering for my churching. I will offer a thousand candles for my fee. Flaming brands shall they be, and steel shall glitter over the fire they make." At harvest-tide town and hamlet flaring into ashes along the French border fulfilled the ruthless vow. But as the King rode down the steep street of Mantes which he had given to the flames his horse stumbled among the embers, and William was flung heavily against his saddle. He was borne home to Rouen to die. The sound of the minster bell woke him at dawn as he lay in the convent of St. Gervais, overlooking the city—it was the hour of prime

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—and stretching out his hands in prayer the King passed quietly away. Death itself took its colour from the savage solitude of his life. Priests and nobles fled as the last breath left him, and the Conqueror's body lay naked and lonely on the floor.

CHAPTER II.

THE NORMAN KINGS.

1085—1154.

WITH the death of the Conqueror passed the terror which had held the barons in awe, while the severance of his dominions roused their hopes of successful resistance to the stern rule beneath which they had bowed. William bequeathed Normandy to his eldest son Robert; but William the Red, his second son, hastened with his father's ring to England where the influence of Lanfranc secured him the crown. The baronage seized the opportunity to rise in arms under pretext of supporting the claims of Robert, whose weakness of character gave full scope for the growth of feudal independence; and Bishop Odo, now freed from prison, placed himself at the head of the revolt. The new King was thrown almost wholly on the loyalty of his English subjects. But the national stamp which William had given to his kingship told at once. The English rallied to the royal standard; Bishop Wulfstan of Worcester, the one surviving Bishop of English blood, defeated the insurgents in the West; while the King, summoning the freemen of country and town to his host under pain of being branded as "nithing" or worthless, advanced with a large force against Rochester where the barons were concentrated. A plague which broke out among the garrison forced them to capitulate, and as the prisoners passed through the royal army cries of "gallows and cord" burst

William the Red.

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from the English ranks. The failure of a later conspiracy whose aim was to set on the throne a kinsman of the royal house, Stephen of Albemarle, with the capture and imprisonment of its head, Robert Mowbray, the Earl of Northumberland, brought home at last to the baronage their helplessness in a strife with the King. The genius of the Conqueror had saved England from the danger of feudalism. But he had left as weighty a danger in the power which trod feudalism under foot. The power of the Crown was a purely personal power, restrained under the Conqueror by his own high sense of duty, but capable of becoming a pure despotism in the hands of his son. The nobles were at his feet, and the policy of his minister, Bishop Flambard of Durham, loaded their estates with feudal obligations. Each tenant was held as bound to appear if needful thrice a year at the royal court, to pay a heavy fine or rent on succession to his estate, to contribute aid in case of the King's capture in war or the knighthood of the King's eldest son or the marriage of his eldest daughter. An heir who was still a minor passed into the King's wardship, and all profit from his lands went during the period of wardship to the King. If the estate fell to an heiress, her hand was at the King's disposal and was generally sold by him to the highest bidder. These rights of "marriage" and "wardship" as well as the exaction of aids at the royal will poured wealth into the treasury while they impoverished and fettered the baronage. A fresh source of revenue was found in the Church. The same principles of feudal dependence were applied to its lands as to those of the nobles; and during the vacancy of a see or abbey its profits, like those of a minor, were swept into the royal hoard. William's profligacy and extravagance soon tempted him to abuse this resource, and so steadily did he refuse to appoint successors to prelates whom death removed that at the close of his reign one archbishopric, four bishopricks, and eleven abbeys were found to be without pastors.

Vile as was this system of extortion and misrule but a single voice was raised in protest against it. Lanfranc had been followed in his abbey at Bec by the most famous of his scholars, Anselm of Aosta, an Italian like himself. Friends as they were, no two men could be more strangely unlike. Anselm had grown to manhood in the quiet solitude of his mountain-valley, a tender-hearted poet-dreamer, with a soul pure as the Alpine snows above him, and an intelligence keen and clear as the mountain-air. The whole temper of the man was painted in a dream of his youth. It seemed to him as though heaven lay, a stately palace, amid the gleaming hill-peaks, while the women reaping in the corn-fields of the valley became harvest-maidens of its King. They reaped idly, and Anselm, grieved at their sloth, hastily climbed the mountain side to accuse them to their lord. As he reached the palace the King's voice called him to his feet and he poured forth his tale; then at the royal bidding bread of an unearthly whiteness was set before him, and he ate and was refreshed. The dream passed with the morning; but the sense of heaven's nearness to earth, the fervid loyalty to the service of his Lord, the tender restfulness and peace in the Divine presence which it reflected lived on in the life of Anselm. Wandering like other Italian scholars to Normandy, he became a monk under Lanfranc, and on his teacher's removal to higher duties succeeded him in the direction of the Abbey of Bec. No teacher has ever thrown a greater spirit of love into his toil. "Force your scholars to improve!" he burst out to another teacher who relied on blows and compulsion. "Did you ever see a craftsman fashion a fair image out of a golden plate by blows alone? Does he not now gently press it and strike it with his tools, now with wise art yet more gently raise and shape it? What do your scholars turn into under this ceaseless beating?" "They turn only brutal," was the reply. "You have bad luck," was the keen answer, "in a training that only turns men into beasts." The

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worst natures softened before this tenderness and patience. Even the Conqueror, so harsh and terrible to others, became another man, gracious and easy of speech, with Anselm. But amidst his absorbing cares as a teacher, the Prior of Bec found time for philosophical speculations to which we owe the scientific inquiries which built up the theology of the middle ages. His famous works were the first attempts of any Christian thinker to elicit the idea of God from the very nature of the human reason. His passion for abstruse thought robbed him of food and sleep. Sometimes he could hardly pray. Often the night was a long watch till he could seize his conception and write it on the wax tablets which lay beside him. But not even a fever of intense thought such as this could draw Anselm's heart from its passionate tenderness and love. Sick monks in the infirmary could relish no drink save the juice which his hand squeezed for them from the grape-bunch. In the later days of his archbishoprick a hare chased by the hounds took refuge under his horse, and his gentle voice grew loud as he forbade a huntsman to stir in the chase while the creature darted off again to the woods. Even the greed of lands for the Church to which so many religious men yielded found its characteristic rebuke as the battling lawyers in such a suit saw Anselm quietly close his eyes in court and go peacefully to sleep.

William and Anselm.

A sudden impulse of the Red King drew the abbot from these quiet studies into the storms of the world. The see of Canterbury had long been left without a Primate when a dangerous illness frightened the King into the promotion of Anselm. The Abbot, who happened at the time to be in England on the business of his house, was dragged to the royal couch and the cross forced into his hands. But William had no sooner recovered from his sickness than he found himself face to face with an opponent whose meek and loving temper rose into firmness and grandeur when it fronted the tyranny of the King. Much of the struggle between William and the Archbishop turned

on questions such as the right of investiture, which have little bearing on our history, but the particular question at issue was of less importance than the fact of a contest at all. The boldness of Anselm's attitude not only broke the tradition of ecclesiastical servitude but infused through the nation at large a new spirit of independence. The real character of the strife appears in the Primate's answer when his remonstrances against the lawless exactions from the Church were met by a demand for a present on his own promotion, and his first offer of five hundred pounds was contemptuously refused. "Treat me as a free man," Anselm replied, "and I devote myself and all that I have to your service, but if you treat me as a slave you shall have neither me nor mine." A burst of the Red King's fury drove the Archbishop from court, and he finally decided to quit the country, but his example had not been lost, and the close of William's reign found a new spirit of freedom in England with which the greatest of the Conqueror's sons was glad to make terms. His exile however left William without a check. Supreme at home, he was full of ambition abroad. As a soldier the Red King was little inferior to his father. Normandy had been pledged to him by his brother Robert in exchange for a sum which enabled the Duke to march in the first Crusade for the delivery of the Holy Land, and a rebellion at Le Mans was subdued by the fierce energy with which William flung himself at the news of it into the first boat he found, and crossed the Channel in face of a storm. "Kings never drown," he replied contemptuously to the remonstrances of his followers. Homage was again wrested from Malcolm by a march to the Firth of Forth, and the subsequent death of that king threw Scotland into a disorder which enabled an army under Eadgar Ætheling to establish Edgar, the son of Margaret, as an English feudatory on the throne. In Wales William was less triumphant, and the terrible losses inflicted on the heavy Norman cavalry in the fastnesses of Snowdon forced him to fall back on

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the slower but wiser policy of the Conqueror. But triumph and defeat alike ended in a strange and tragical close. In 1100 the Red King was found dead by peasants in a glade of the New Forest, with the arrow either of a hunter or an assassin in his breast.

Henry the First.

Robert was at this moment on his return from the Holy Land, where his bravery had redeemed much of his earlier ill-fame, and the English crown was seized by his younger brother Henry in spite of the opposition of the baronage, who clung to the Duke of Normandy and the union of their estates on both sides the Channel under a single ruler. Their attitude threw Henry, as it had thrown Rufus, on the support of the English, and the two great measures which followed his coronation, his grant of a charter, and his marriage with Matilda, mark the new relation which this support brought about between the people and their King. Henry's Charter is important, not merely as a direct precedent for the Great Charter of John, but as the first limitation on the despotism established by the Conqueror and carried to such a height by his son. The "evil customs" by which the Red King had enslaved and plundered the Church were explicitly renounced in it, the unlimited demands made by both the Conqueror and his son on the baronage exchanged for customary fees, while the rights of the people itself, though recognized more vaguely, were not forgotten. The barons were held to do justice to their under-tenants and to renounce tyrannical exactions from them, the King promising to restore order and the "law of Eadward," the old constitution of the realm, with the changes which his father had introduced. His marriage gave a significance to these promises which the meanest English peasant could understand. Edith, or Matilda, was the daughter of King Malcolm of Scotland and of Margaret, the sister of Eadgar Ætheling. She had been brought up in the nunnery of Romsey by its abbess, her aunt Christina, and the veil which she had taken there formed an obstacle to her union with the King

which was only removed by the wisdom of Anselm. While Flambard, the embodiment of the Red King's despotism, was thrown into the Tower, the Archbishop's recall had been one of Henry's first acts after his accession. Matilda appeared before his court to tell her tale in words of passionate earnestness. She had been veiled in her childhood, she asserted, only to save her from the insults of the rude soldiery who infested the land, had flung the veil from her again and again, and had yielded at last to the unwomanly taunts, the actual blows of her aunt. "As often as I stood in her presence," the girl pleaded, "I wore the veil, trembling as I wore it with indignation and grief. But as soon as I could get out of her sight I used to snatch it from my head, fling it on the ground, and trample it under foot. That was the way, and none other, in which I was veiled." Anselm at once declared her free from conventual bonds, and the shout of the English multitude when he set the crown on Matilda's brow drowned the murmur of Churchman or of baron. The mockery of the Norman nobles, who nicknamed the King and his spouse Godric and Godgifu, was lost in the joy of the people at large. For the first time since the Conquest an English sovereign sat on the English throne. The blood of Cerdic and Ælfred was to blend itself with that of Rolf and the Conqueror. Henceforth it was impossible that the two peoples should remain parted from each other; so quick indeed was their union that the very name of Norman had passed away in half a century, and at the accession of Henry's grandson it was impossible to distinguish between the descendants of the conquerors and those of the conquered at Senlac.

Henry and the Barons.

Charter and marriage roused an enthusiasm among his subjects which enabled Henry to defy the claims of his brother and the disaffection of his nobles. Early in 1101 Robert landed at Portsmouth to win the crown in arms. The great barons with hardly an exception stood aloof from the King. But the Norman Duke found

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himself face to face with an English army which gathered at Anselm's summons round Henry's standard. The temper of the English had rallied from the panic of Senlac. The soldiers who came to fight for their King "nowise feared the Normans." As Henry rode along their lines showing them how to keep firm their shield-wall against the lances of Robert's knighthood, he was met with shouts for battle. But King and Duke alike shrank from a contest in which the victory of either side would have undone the Conqueror's work. The one saw his effort was hopeless, the other was only anxious to remove his rival from the realm, and by a peace which the Count of Meulan negotiated Robert recognized Henry as King of England while Henry gave up his fief in the Cotentin to his brother the Duke. Robert's retreat left Henry free to deal sternly with the barons who had forsaken him. Robert de Lacy was stripped of his manors in Yorkshire; Robert Malet was driven from his lands in Suffolk; Ivo of Grantmesnil lost his vast estates and went to the Holy Land as a pilgrim. But greater even than these was Robert of Belesme, the son of Roger of Montgomery, who held in England the earldoms of Shrewsbury and Arundel, while in Normandy he was Count of Ponthieu and Alençon. Robert stood at the head of the baronage in wealth and power: and his summons to the King's Court to answer for his refusal of aid to the King was answered by a haughty defiance. But again the Norman baronage had to feel the strength which English loyalty gave to the Crown. Sixty thousand Englishmen followed Henry to the attack of Robert's strongholds along the Welsh border. It was in vain that the nobles about the King, conscious that Robert's fall left them helpless in Henry's hands, strove to bring about a peace. The English soldiers shouted "Heed not these traitors, our lord King Henry," and with the people at his back the King stood firm. Only an early surrender saved Robert's life. He was suffered to retire to his estates in Normandy, but his English lands were

confiscated to the Crown. "Rejoice, King Henry," shouted the English soldiers, "for you began to be a free King on that day when you conquered Robert of Belesme and drove him from the land." Master of his own realm and enriched by the confiscated lands of the ruined barons Henry crossed into Normandy, where the misgovernment of the Duke had alienated the clergy and tradesfolk, and where the outrages of nobles like Robert of Belesme forced the more peaceful classes to call the King to their aid. In 1106 his forces met those of his brother on the field of Tenchebray, and a decisive English victory on Norman soil avenged the shame of Hastings. The conquered duchy became a dependency of the English crown, and Henry's energies were frittered away through a quarter of a century in crushing its revolts, the hostility of the French, and the efforts of his nephew William the son of Robert, to regain the crown which his father had lost.

Henry's rule.

With the victory of Tenchebray Henry was free to enter on that work of administration which was to make his reign memorable in our history. Successful as his wars had been he was in heart no warrior but a statesman, and his greatness showed itself less in the field than in the council chamber. His outer bearing like his inner temper stood in marked contrast to that of his father. Well read, accomplished, easy and fluent of speech, the lord of a harem of mistresses, the centre of a gay court where poet and jongleur found a home, Henry remained cool, self-possessed, clear-sighted, hard, methodical, loveless himself, and neither seeking nor desiring his people's love, but wringing from them their gratitude and regard by sheer dint of good government. His work of order was necessarily a costly work; and the steady pressure of his taxation, a pressure made the harder by local famines and plagues during his reign, has left traces of the grumbling it roused in the pages of the English Chronicle. But even the Chronicler is forced to own amidst his grumblings that Henry "was a good man, and great was the awe of him."

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He had little of his father's creative genius, of that far-reaching originality by which the Conqueror stamped himself and his will on the very fabric of our history. But he had the passion for order, the love of justice, the faculty of organization, the power of steady and unwavering rule, which was needed to complete the Conqueror's work. His aim was peace, and the title of the Peace-loving King which was given him at his death showed with what a steadiness and constancy he carried out his aim. In Normandy indeed his work was ever and anon undone by outbreaks of its baronage, outbreaks sternly repressed only that the work might be patiently and calmly taken up again where it had been broken off. But in England his will was carried out with a perfect success. For more than a quarter of a century the land had rest. Without, the Scots were held in friendship, the Welsh were bridled by a steady and well-planned scheme of gradual conquest. Within, the licence of the baronage was held sternly down, and justice secured for all. "He governed with a strong hand," says Orderic, but the strong hand was the hand of a king, not of a tyrant. "Great was the awe of him," writes the annalist of Peterborough. "No man durst ill-do to another in his days. Peace he made for man and beast." Pitiless as were the blows he aimed at the nobles who withstood him, they were blows which his English subjects felt to be struck in their cause. "While he mastered by policy the foremost counts and lords and the boldest tyrants, he ever cherished and protected peaceful men and men of religion and men of the middle class." What impressed observers most was the unswerving, changeless temper of his rule. The stern justice, the terrible punishments he inflicted on all who broke his laws, were parts of a fixed system which differed widely from the capricious severity of a mere despot. Hardly less impressive was his unvarying success. Heavy as were the blows which destiny levelled at him, Henry bore and rose unconquered from all. To the end of his life

the proudest barons lay bound and blinded in his prison. His hoard grew greater and greater. Normandy, toss as she might, lay helpless at his feet to the last. In England it was only after his death that men dared mutter what evil things they had thought of Henry the Peace-lover, or censure the pitilessness, the greed, and the lust which had blurred the wisdom and splendour of his rule.

Henry's Administration.

His vigorous administration carried out into detail the system of government which the Conqueror had sketched. The vast estates which had fallen to the crown through revolt and forfeiture were granted out to new men dependent on royal favour. On the ruins of the great feudatories whom he had crushed Henry built up a class of lesser nobles, whom the older barons of the Conquest looked down on in scorn, but who were strong enough to form a counterpoise to their influence while they furnished the Crown with a class of useful administrators whom Henry employed as his sheriffs and judges. A new organization of justice and finance bound the kingdom more tightly together in Henry's grasp. The Clerks of the Royal Chapel were formed into a body of secretaries or royal ministers, whose head bore the title of Chancellor. Above them stood the Justiciar, or Lieutenant-General of the kingdom, who in the frequent absence of the King acted as Regent of the realm, and whose staff, selected from the barons connected with the royal household, were formed into a Supreme Court of the realm. The King's Court, as this was called, permanently represented the whole court of royal vassals which had hitherto been summoned thrice in the year. As the royal council, it revised and registered laws, and its "counsel and consent," though merely formal, preserved the principle of the older popular legislation. As a court of justice it formed the highest court of appeal: it could call up any suit from a lower tribunal on the application of a suitor, while the union of several sheriffdoms under some of its members connected it closely with the local courts. As a financial

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body, its chief work lay in the assessment and collection of the revenue. In this capacity it took the name of the Court of Exchequer from the chequered table, much like a chess-board, at which it sat and on which accounts were rendered. In their financial capacity its justices became "barons of the Exchequer." Twice every year the sheriff of each county appeared before these barons and rendered the sum of the fixed rent from royal domains, the Danegeld or land tax, the fines of the local courts, the feudal aids from the baronial estates, which formed the chief part of the royal revenue. Local disputes respecting these payments or the assessment of the town-rents were settled by a detachment of barons from the court who made the circuit of the shires, and whose fiscal visitations led to the judicial visitations, the "judges' circuits," which still form so marked a feature in our legal system.

The Angevin Marriage.

Measures such as these changed the whole temper of the Norman rule. It remained a despotism, but from this moment it was a despotism regulated and held in check by the forms of administrative routine. Heavy as was the taxation under Henry the First, terrible as was the suffering throughout his reign from famine and plague, the peace and order which his government secured through thirty years won a rest for the land in which conqueror and conquered blended into a single people and in which this people slowly moved forward to a new freedom. But while England thus rested in peace a terrible blow broke the fortunes of her King. In 1120 his son, William the "Ætheling," with a crowd of nobles accompanied Henry on his return from Normandy; but the White ship in which he embarked lingered behind the rest of the royal fleet till the guards of the King's treasure pressed its departure. It had hardly cleared the harbour when the ship's side struck on a rock, and in an instant it sank beneath the waves. One terrible cry ringing through the silence of the night, was heard by the royal fleet; but it was not till the morning that the fatal news reached the

King. Stern as he was, Henry fell senseless to the ground, and rose never to smile again. He had no other son, and the circle of his foreign foes closed round him the more fiercely that William, the son of his captive brother Robert, was now his natural heir. Henry hated William while he loved his own daughter Maud, who had been married to the Emperor Henry the Fifth, but who had been restored by his death to her father's court. The succession of a woman was new in English history; it was strange to a feudal baronage. But when all hope of issue from a second wife whom he wedded was over Henry forced priests and nobles to swear allegiance to Maud as their future mistress, and affianced her to Geoffry the Handsome, the son of the one foe whom he dreaded, Count Fulk of Anjou.

Anjou.

The marriage of Matilda was but a step in the wonderful history by which the descendants of a Breton woodman became masters not of Anjou only, but of Touraine, Maine, and Poitou, of Gascony and Auvergne, of Acquitaine and Normandy, and sovereigns at last of the great realm which Normandy had won. The legend of the father of their races carries us back to the times of our own Ælfred, when the Danes were ravaging along Loire as they ravaged along Thames. In the heart of the Breton border, in the debateable land between France and Britanny, dwelt Tortulf the Forester, half-brigand, half-hunter as the gloomy days went, living in free outlaw-fashion in the woods about Rennes. Tortulf had learned in his rough forest school "how to strike the foe, to sleep on the bare ground, to bear hunger and toil, summer's heat and winter's frost, how to fear nothing save ill-fame." Following King Charles the Bald in his struggle with the Danes, the woodman won broad lands along Loire, and his son Ingelger, who had swept the Northmen from Touraine and the land to the west, which they had burned and wasted into a vast solitude, became the first Count of Anjou. But the tale of Tortulf and Ingelger is a mere creation of some twelfth century jongleur. The earliest Count whom history recognizes is

Fulk the Red. Fulk attached himself to the Dukes of France who were now drawing nearer to the throne, and in 888 received from them in guerdon the western portion of Anjou which lay across the Mayenne. The story of his son is a story of peace, breaking like a quiet idyll the war-storms of his house. Alone of his race Fulk the Good waged no wars: his delight was to sit in the choir of Tours and to be called "Canon." One Martinmas eve Fulk was singing there in clerkly guise when the French King, Lewis d'Outremer, entered the church. "He sings like a priest," laughed the King as his nobles pointed mockingly to the figure of the Count-Canon. But Fulk was ready with his reply. "Know, my lord," wrote the Count of Anjou, "that a King unlearned is a crowned ass." Fulk was in fact no priest, but a busy ruler, governing, enforcing peace, and carrying justice to every corner of the wasted land. To him alone of his race men gave the title of "the Good."

Fulk the Black.

Hampered by revolt, himself in character little more than a bold, dashing soldier, Fulk's son, Geoffry Grey-gown, sank almost into a vassal of his powerful neighbours, the Counts of Blois and Champagne. But this vassalage was roughly shaken off by his successor. Fulk Nerra, Fulk the Black, is the greatest of the Angevins, the first in whom we can trace that marked type of character which their house was to preserve through two hundred years. He was without natural affection. In his youth he burnt a wife at the stake, and legend told how he led her to her doom decked out in his gayest attire. In his old age he waged his bitterest war against his son, and exacted from him when vanquished a humiliation which men reserved for the deadliest of their foes. "You are conquered, you are conquered!" shouted the old man in fierce exultation, as Geoffry, bridled and saddled like a beast of burden, crawled for pardon to his father's feet. In Fulk first appeared that low type of superstition which startled even superstitious ages in the early Plantagenets.

Robber as he was of Church lands, and contemptuous of ecclesiastical censures, the fear of the end of the world drove Fulk to the Holy Sepulchre. Barefoot and with the strokes of the scourge falling heavily on his shoulders, the Count had himself dragged by a halter through the streets of Jerusalem, and courted the doom of martyrdom by his wild outcries of penitence. He rewarded the fidelity of Herbert of Le Mans, whose aid saved him from utter ruin, by entrapping him into captivity and robbing him of his lands. He secured the terrified friendship of the French King by despatching twelve assassins to cut down before his eyes the minister who had troubled it. Familiar as the age was with treason and rapine and blood, it recoiled from the cool cynicism of his crimes, and believed the wrath of Heaven to have been revealed against the union of the worst forms of evil in Fulk the Black. But neither the wrath of Heaven nor the curses of men broke with a single mishap the fifty years of his success.

At his accession in 987 Anjou was the least important of the greater provinces of France. At his death in 1040 it stood, if not in extent, at least in real power, first among them all. Cool-headed, clear-sighted, quick to resolve, quicker to strike, Fulk's career was one long series of victories over all his rivals. He was a consummate general, and he had the gift of personal bravery, which was denied to some of his greatest descendants. There was a moment in the first of his battles when the day seemed lost for Anjou; a feigned retreat of the Bretons drew the Angevin horsemen into a line of hidden pitfalls, and the Count himself was flung heavily to the ground. Dragged from the medley of men and horses, he swept down almost singly on the foe "as a storm-wind" (so rang the pæan of the Angevins) "sweeps down on the thick corn-rows," and the field was won. But to these qualities of the warrior he added a power of political organization, a capacity for far-reaching combinations, a faculty of statesmanship, which became the heritage of his race, and

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lifted them as high above the intellectual level of the rulers of their time as their shameless wickedness degraded them below the level of man. His overthrow of Britanny on the field of Conquereux was followed by the gradual absorption of Southern Touraine; a victory at Pontlevoi crushed the rival house of Blois; the seizure of Saumur completed his conquests in the south, while Northern Touraine was won bit by bit till only Tours resisted the Angevin. The treacherous seizure of its Count, Herbert Wakedog, left Maine at his mercy.

Death of Henry.

His work of conquest was completed by his son. Geoffry Martel wrested Tours from the Count of Blois, and by the seizure of Le Mans brought his border to the Norman frontier. Here however his advance was checked by the genius of William the Conqueror, and with his death the greatness of Anjou came for a while to an end. Stripped of Maine by the Normans and broken by dissensions within, the weak and profligate rule of Fulk Rechin left Anjou powerless. But in 1109 it woke to fresh energy with the accession of his son, Fulk of Jerusalem. Now urging the turbulent Norman nobles to revolt, now supporting Robert's son, William, in his strife with his uncle, offering himself throughout as the loyal supporter of the French kingdom which was now hemmed in on almost every side by the forces of the English king and of his allies the Counts of Blois and Champagne, Fulk was the one enemy whom Henry the First really feared. It was to disarm his restless hostility that the King gave the hand of Matilda to Geoffry the Handsome. But the hatred between Norman and Angevin had been too bitter to make such a marriage popular, and the secrecy with which it was brought about was held by the barons to free them from the oath they had previously sworn. As no baron if he was sonless could give a husband to his daughter save with his lord's consent, the nobles held by a strained analogy that their own assent was needful to the marriage of Maud. Henry found a

more pressing danger in the greed of her husband Geoffry, whose habit of wearing the common broom of Anjou, the planta genista, in his helmet gave him the title of Plantagenet. His claims ended at last in intrigues with the Norman nobles, and Henry hurried to the border to meet an Angevin invasion; but the plot broke down at his presence, the Angevins retired, and at the close of 1135 the old King withdrew to the Forest of Lyons to die.

Stephen.

"God give him," wrote the Archbishop of Rouen from Henry's death-bed, "the peace he loved." With him indeed closed the long peace of the Norman rule. An outburst of anarchy followed on the news of his departure, and in the midst of the turmoil Earl Stephen, his nephew, appeared at the gates of London. Stephen was a son of the Conqueror's daughter, Adela, who had married a Count of Blois; he had been brought up at the English court, had been made Count of Mortain by Henry, had become Count of Boulogne by his marriage, and as head of the Norman baronage had been the first to pledge himself to support Matilda's succession. But his own claim as nearest male heir of the Conqueror's blood (for his cousin, the son of Robert, had fallen some years before in Flanders) was supported by his personal popularity; mere swordsman as he was, his good-humour, his generosity, his very prodigality made Stephen a favourite with all. No noble however had as yet ventured to join him nor had any town opened its gates when London poured out to meet him with uproarious welcome. Neither baron nor prelate was present to constitute a National Council, but the great city did not hesitate to take their place. The voice of her citizens had long been accepted as representative of the popular assent in the election of a king; but it marks the progress of English independence under Henry that London now claimed of itself the right of election. Undismayed by the absence of the hereditary counsellors of the crown its "Aldermen and wise folk gathered together the folk-moot, and these providing at their own will for the good

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of the realm unanimously resolved to choose a king." The solemn deliberation ended in the choice of Stephen, the citizens swore to defend the King with money and blood, Stephen swore to apply his whole strength to the pacification and good government of the realm. It was in fact the new union of conquered and conquerors into a single England that did Stephen's work. The succession of Maud meant the rule of Geoffry of Anjou, and to Norman as to Englishman the rule of the Angevin was a foreign rule. The welcome Stephen won at London and Winchester, his seizure of the royal treasure, the adhesion of the Justiciar Bishop Roger to his cause, the reluctant consent of the Archbishop, the hopelessness of aid from Anjou where Geoffry was at this moment pressed by revolt, the need above all of some king to meet the outbreak of anarchy which followed Henry's death, secured Stephen the voice of the baronage. He was crowned at Christmas-tide; and soon joined by Robert Earl of Gloucester, a bastard son of Henry and the chief of his nobles; while the issue of a charter from Oxford in 1136, a charter which renewed the dead King's pledge of good government, promised another Henry to the realm. The charter surrendered all forests made in the last reign as a sop to the nobles, it conciliated the Church by granting freedom of election and renouncing all right to the profits of vacant churches, it won the people by a pledge to abolish the tax of Danegeld.

Battle of the Standard.

The king's first two years were years of success and prosperity. Two risings of barons in the east and west were easily put down, and in 1137 Stephen passed into Normandy and secured the Duchy against an attack from Anjou. But already the elements of trouble were gathering round him. Stephen was a mere soldier, with few kingly qualities save that of a soldier's bravery; and the realm soon began to slip from his grasp. He turned against himself the jealous dread of foreigners to which he owed his accession by surrounding himself with hired knights from Flanders; he drained the treasury by

creating new earls endowed with pensions from it, and recruited his means by base coinage. His consciousness of the gathering storm only drove Stephen to bind his friends to him by suffering them to fortify castles and to renew the feudal tyranny which Henry had struck down. But the long reign of the dead king had left the Crown so strong that even yet Stephen could hold his own. A plot which Robert of Gloucester had been weaving from the outset of his reign came indeed to a head in 1138, and the Earl's revolt stripped Stephen of Caen and half Normandy. But when his partizans in England rose in the south and the west and the King of Scots, whose friendship Stephen had bought in the opening of his reign by the cession of Carlisle, poured over the northern border, the nation stood firmly by the King. Stephen himself marched on the western rebels and soon left them few strongholds save Bristol. His people fought for him in the north. The pillage and cruelties of the wild tribes of Galloway and the Highlands roused the spirit of the Yorkshiremen. Baron and freeman gathered at York round Archbishop Thurstan and marched to the field of Northallerton to await the foe. The sacred banners of St. Cuthbert of Durham, St. Peter of York, St. John of Beverley, and St. Wilfred of Ripon hung from a pole fixed in a four-wheeled car which stood in the centre of the host. The first onset of David's host was a terrible one. "I who wear no armour," shouted the chief of the Galwegians, "will go as far this day as any one with breastplate of mail;" his men charged with wilds shout of "Albin, Albin," and were followed by the Norman knighthood of the Lowlands. But their repulse was complete; the fierce hordes dashed in vain against the close English ranks around the Standard, and the whole army fled in confusion to Carlisle.

Seizure of the Bishops.

Weak indeed as Stephen was, the administrative organization of Henry still did its work. Roger remained justiciar, his son was chancellor, his nephew Nigel, the Bishop of Ely, was treasurer. Finance and justice were thus concentrated

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in the hands of a single family which preserved amidst the deepening misrule something of the old order and rule, and which stood at the head of the "new men," whom Henry had raised into importance and made the instruments of his will. These new men were still weak by the side of the older nobles; and conscious of the jealousy and ill-will with which they were regarded they followed in self-defence the example which the barons were setting in building and fortifying castles on their domains. Roger and his house, the objects from their official position of a deeper grudge than any, were carried away by the panic. The justiciar and his son fortified their castles, and it was only with a strong force at their back that the prelates appeared at court. Their attitude was one to rouse Stephen's jealousy, and the news of Matilda's purpose of invasion lent strength to the doubts which the nobles cast on their fidelity. All the weak violence of the King's temper suddenly broke out. He seized Roger the Chancellor and the Bishop of Lincoln when they appeared at Oxford in June, 1139, and forced them to surrender their strongholds. Shame broke the justiciar's heart; he died at the close of the year, and his nephew Nigel of Ely was driven from the realm. But the fall of this house shattered the whole system of government. The King's court and the Exchequer ceased to work at a moment when the landing of Earl Robert and the Empress Matilda set Stephen face to face with a danger greater than he had yet encountered, while the clergy alienated by the arrest of the Bishops and the disregard of their protests, stood angrily aloof.

Civil War.

The three bases of Henry's system of government, the subjection of the baronage to the law, the good-will of the Church, and the organization of justice and finance, were now utterly ruined; and for the seventeen years which passed from this hour to the Treaty of Wallingford England was given up to the miseries of civil war. The country was divided between the adherents

of the two rivals, the West supporting Matilda, London and the East Stephen. A defeat at Lincoln in 1141 left the latter a captive in the hands of his enemies, while Matilda was received throughout the land as its "Lady." But the disdain with which she repulsed the claim of London to the enjoyment of its older privileges called its burghers to arms; her resolve to hold Stephen a prisoner roused his party again to life, and she was driven to Oxford to be besieged there in 1142 by Stephen himself, who had obtained his release in exchange for Earl Robert after the capture of the Earl in a battle at Devizes. She escaped from the castle, but with the death of Robert her struggle became a hopeless one, and in 1146 she withdrew to Normandy. The war was now a mere chaos of pillage and bloodshed. The royal power came to an end. The royal courts were suspended, for not a baron or bishop would come at the King's call. The bishops met in council to protest, but their protests and excommunications fell on deafened ears. For the first and last time in her history England was in the hands of the baronage, and their outrages showed from what horrors the stern rule of the Norman kings had saved her. Castles sprang up everywhere. "They filled the land with castles," says the terrible annalist of the time. "They greatly oppressed the wretched people by making them work at these castles, and when they were finished they filled them with devils and armed men." In each of these robber-holds a petty tyrant ruled like a king. The strife for the Crown had broken into a medley of feuds between baron and baron, for none could brook an equal or a superior in his fellow. "They fought among themselves with deadly hatred, they spoiled the fairest lands with fire and rapine; in what had been the most fertile of counties they destroyed almost all the provision of bread." For fight as they might with one another, all were at one in the plunder of the land. Towns were put to ransom. Villages were sacked and burned. All who were deemed to have goods, whether men or women, were carried off and

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flung into dungeons and tortured till they yielded up their wealth. No ghastlier picture of a nation's misery has ever been painted than that which closes the English Chronicle whose last accents falter out amidst the horrors of the time. "They hanged up men by their feet and smoked them with foul smoke. Some were hanged up by their thumbs, others by the head, and burning things were hung on to their feet. They put knotted strings about men's heads, and writhed them till they went to the brain. They put men into prisons where adders and snakes and toads were crawling, and so they tormented them. Some they put into a chest short and narrow and not deep and that had sharp stones within, and forced men therein so that they broke all their limbs. In many of the castles were hateful and grim things called rachenteges, which two or three men had enough to do to carry. It was thus made: it was fastened to a beam and had a sharp iron to go about a man's neck and throat, so that he might noways sit, or lie, or sleep, but he bore all the iron. Many thousands they starved with hunger."

Religious Revival.

It was only after years of this feudal anarchy that England was rescued from it by the efforts of the Church. The political influence of the Church had been greatly lessened by the Conquest: for pious, learned, and energetic as the bulk of the Conqueror's bishops were, they were not Englishmen. Till the reign of Henry the First no Englishman occupied an English see. This severance of the higher clergy from the lower priesthood and from the people went far to paralyze the constitutional influence of the Church. Anselm stood alone against Rufus, and when Anselm was gone no voice of ecclesiastical freedom broke the silence of the reign of Henry the First. But at the close of Henry's reign and throughout the reign of Stephen England was stirred by the first of those great religious movements which it was to experience afterwards in the preaching of the Friars, the Lollardism of Wyclif, the Reformation, the Puritan enthusiasm, and the mission work of the Wesleys. Everywhere in town and country

men banded themselves together for prayer: hermits flocked to the woods: noble and churl welcomed the austere Cistercians, a reformed offshoot of the Benedictine order, as they spread over the moors and forests of the North. A new spirit of devotion woke the slumbers of the religious houses, and penetrated alike to the home of the noble and the trader. London took its full share in the revival. The city was proud of its religion, its thirteen conventual and more than a hundred parochial churches. The new impulse changed its very aspect. In the midst of the city Bishop Richard busied himself with the vast cathedral church of St. Paul which Bishop Maurice had begun; barges came up the river with stone from Caen for the great arches that moved the popular wonder, while street and lane were being levelled to make room for its famous churchyard. Rahere, a minstrel at Henry's court, raised the Priory of Saint Bartholomew beside Smithfield. Alfune built St. Giles's at Cripplegate. The old English Cnichtenagild surrendered their soke of Aldgate as a site for the new priory of the Holy Trinity. The tale of this house paints admirably the temper of the citizens at the time. Its founder, Prior Norman, built church and cloister and bought books and vestments in so liberal a fashion that no money remained to buy bread. The canons were at their last gasp when the city-folk, looking into the refectory as they passed round the cloister in their usual Sunday procession, saw the tables laid but not a single loaf on them. "Here is a fine set out," said the citizens; "but where is the bread to come from?" The women who were present vowed each to bring a loaf every Sunday, and there was soon bread enough and to spare for the priory and its priests.

Thomas of London.

We see the strength of the new movement in the new class of ecclesiastics whom it forced on to the stage. Men like Archbishop Theobald drew whatever influence they wielded from a belief in their holiness of life and unselfishness of aim. The paralysis of the Church ceased as the

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new impulse bound prelacy and people together, and at the moment we have reached its power was found strong enough to wrest England out of the chaos of feudal misrule. In the early part of Stephen's reign his brother Henry, the Bishop of Winchester, who had been appointed in 1139 Papal Legate for the realm, had striven to supply the absence of any royal or national authority by convening synods of bishops, and by asserting the moral right of the Church to declare sovereigns unworthy of the throne. The compact between king and people which became a part of constitutional law in the Charter of Henry had gathered new force in the Charter of Stephen, but its legitimate consequence in the responsibility of the crown for the execution of the compact was first drawn out by these ecclesiastical councils. From their alternate depositions of Stephen and Matilda flowed the after depositions of Edward and Richard, and the solemn act by which the succession was changed in the case of James. Extravagant and unauthorized as their expression of it may appear, they expressed the right of a nation to good government. Henry of Winchester however, "half monk, half soldier," as he was called, possessed too little religious influence to wield a really spiritual power, and it was only at the close of Stephen's reign that the nation really found a moral leader in Theobald, the Archbishop of Canterbury. Theobald's ablest agent and adviser was Thomas, the son of Gilbert Beket, a leading citizen and, it is said, Portreeve of London, the site of whose house is still marked by the Mercers' chapel in Cheapside. His mother Rohese was a type of the devout woman of her day; she weighed her boy every year on his birthday against money, clothes, and provisions which she gave to the poor. Thomas grew up amidst the Norman barons and clerks who frequented his father's house with a genial freedom of character tempered by the Norman refinement; he passed from the school of Merton to the University of Paris, and returned to fling himself into the life of the young nobles of the time. Tall,

handsome, bright-eyed, ready of wit and speech, his firmness of temper showed itself in his very sports; to rescue his hawk which had fallen into the water he once plunged into a millrace and was all but crushed by the wheel. The loss of his father's wealth drove him to the court of Archbishop Theobald, and he soon became the Primate's confidant in his plans for the rescue of England.

Treaty of Wallingford.

The natural influence which the Primate would have exerted was long held in suspense by the superior position of Bishop Henry of Winchester as Papal Legate; but this office ceased with the Pope who granted it, and when in 1150 it was transferred to the Archbishop himself Theobald soon made his weight felt. The long disorder of the realm was producing its natural reaction in exhaustion and disgust, as well as in a general craving for return to the line of hereditary succession whose breaking seemed the cause of the nation's woes. But the growth of their son Henry to manhood set naturally aside the pretensions both of Count Geoffry and Matilda. Young as he was Henry already showed the cool long-sighted temper which was to be his characteristic on the throne. Foiled in an early attempt to grasp the crown, he looked quietly on at the disorder which was doing his work till the death of his father at the close of 1151 left him master of Normandy and Anjou. In the spring of the following year his marriage with its duchess, Eleanor of Poitou, added Acquitaine to his dominions. Stephen saw the gathering storm, and strove to meet it. He called on the bishops and baronage to secure the succession of his son Eustace by consenting to his association with him in the kingdom. But the moment was now come for Theobald to play his part. He was already negotiating through Thomas of London with Henry and the Pope; he met Stephen's plans by a refusal to swear fealty to his son, and the bishops, in spite of Stephen's threats, went with their head. The blow was soon followed by a harder one. Thomas, as Theobald's agent, invited Henry to appear in England, and though the Duke disappointed his supporters' hopes by the

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scanty number of men he brought with him in 1153, his weakness proved in the end a source of strength. It was not to foreigners, men said, that Henry owed his success but to the arms of Englishmen. An English army gathered round him, and as the hosts of Stephen and the Duke drew together a battle seemed near which would decide the fate of the realm. But Theobald who was now firmly supported by the greater barons again interfered and forced the rivals to an agreement. To the excited partizans of the house of Anjou it seemed as if the nobles were simply playing their own game in the proposed settlement and striving to preserve their power by a balance of masters. The suspicion was probably groundless, but all fear vanished with the death of Eustace, who rode off from his father's camp, maddened with the ruin of his hopes, to die in August, smitten, as men believed, by the hand of God for his plunder of abbeys. The ground was now clear, and in November the Treaty of Wallingford abolished the evils of the long anarchy. The castles were to be razed, the crown lands resumed, the foreign mercenaries banished from the country, and sheriffs appointed to restore order. Stephen was recognized as King, and in turn recognized Henry as his heir. The Duke received at Oxford the fealty of the barons, and passed into Normandy in the spring of 1154. The work of reformation had already begun. Stephen resented indeed the pressure which Henry put on him to enforce the destruction of the castles built during the anarchy; but Stephen's resistance was but the pettish outbreak of a ruined man. He was in fact fast drawing to the grave; and on his death in October 1154 Henry returned to take the crown without a blow.

THE DOMINIONS OF
THE ANGEVINS
Scale of Stat. Miles
North Sea
Irish Channel
English Channel
Bay of Biscay
ULSTER
CONNAUGHT
LEINSTER
MUNSTER
Dublin
Perth
Edinburgh
York
Lincoln
Oxford
Bristol
Salisbury
Canterbury
Winchester
Exeter
Cherbourg
Caen
Rouen
Evreux
Paris
Orleans
Tours
Le Mans
Angers
Poitiers
Limoges
Bordeaux
Toulouse
Lyons
Arles
Marseilles
Avignon
Montpellier
Narbonne
Carcassone
Toulouse
Auvergne
Dauphiné
Savoy
Piedmont
Genoa
Pisa
Florence
Siena
Rome
Naples
Sicily
Sardinia
Corsica
Tunis
Algiers
Bougia
Constantine
Tripoli
Barca
Fezzan
Ghadames
Ghat
Augila
Egypt
Alexandria
Cairo
Memphis
Thebes
Syene
Nubia
Abyssinia
Red Sea
Arabia
Mecca
Medina
Aden
Persian Gulf
Bagdad
Babylon
Mesopotamia
Armenia
Georgia
Caucasus
Caspian Sea
Circassia
Crimea
Sea of Azof
Black Sea
Constantinople
Adrianople
Thessalonica
Greece
Athens
Corinth
Morea
Negropont
Archipelago
Rhodes
Cyprus
Candia
Crete
Syria
Damascus
Jerusalem
Acre
Tripoli
Antioch
Aleppo
Euphrates
Tigris
Persia
Ispahan
Shiraz
Kerman
Ormuz
Candahar
Cabul
Indus
Multan
Delhi
Agra
Lahore
Cashmere
Thibet
Ganges
Bengal
Calcutta
Pegu
Ava
Siam
Malacca
Sumatra
Java
Borneo
Celebes
Moluccas
Philippines
China
Pekin
Nankin
Canton
Japan
Yedo
Kamtschatka
Behring's Straits
Kamtschatka
Aleutian Islands
Alaska
Mount St. Elias
Mount Fairweather
Sitka
Nootka Sound
Vancouver's Island
Columbia R.
Oregon
California
San Francisco
Monterey
Mexico
Mexico City
Acapulco
Vera Cruz
Tampico
Rio Grande
Texas
Louisiana
New Orleans
Mississippi R.
Missouri R.
Ohio R.
Illinois R.
Lake Superior
Lake Michigan
Lake Huron
Lake Erie
Lake Ontario
Niagara
Quebec
Montreal
Hudson's Bay
Labrador
Newfoundland
St. Lawrence R.
Nova Scotia
New Brunswick
Halifax
Boston
New York
Philadelphia
Baltimore
Washington
Virginia
Carolina
Georgia
Florida
Bahama Islands
Jamaica
Hispaniola
Cuba
Porto Rico
Caribbee Islands
Trinidad
Guiana
Surinam
Cayenne
Amazon R.
Brazil
Rio Janeiro
Bahia
Pernambuco
Cape Verd Islands
Canary Islands
Madeira
Azores
Cape de Verd
Sierra Leone
Guinea
Gold Coast
Benin
Bight of Benin
Bight of Biafra
Cameroons
Gaboon
Congo
Angola
Benguela
Cape of Good Hope
Cape Town
Table Bay
Natal
Port Natal
Mozambique
Zanguebar
Quiloa
Melinda
Mombaza
Abyssinia
Nubia
Dongola
Sennaar
Kordofan
Darfur
Bornou
Nigritia
Timbuctoo
Senegal
Gambia
Morocco
Fez
Tangier
Ceuta
Gibraltar
Algeciras
Tarifa
Cadiz
Seville
Cordova
Granada
Malaga
Valencia
Barcelona
Saragossa
Madrid
Toledo
Salamanca
Valladolid
Burgos
Pampeluna
Bilbao
Santander
Oviedo
Leon
Zamora
Coimbra
Lisbon
Oporto
Braga
Evora
Badajoz
Elvas
Portalegre
Santarem
Setuval
Algarve
Faro
Tavira
Sagres
Cape St. Vincent
Cape Finisterre
Corunna
Vigo
Santiago
Ferrol
Gijon
Santander
Bilbao
Pampeluna
Saragossa
Tortosa
Tarragona
Barcelona
Gerona
Perpignan
Montpellier
Nismes
Arles
Marseilles
Toulon
Nice
Genoa
Turin
Milan
Mantua
Verona
Venice
Padua
Ferrara
Bologna
Ravenna
Rimini
Ancona
Urbino
Perugia
Florence
Pisa
Leghorn
Siena
Rome
Naples
Capua
Gaeta
Salerno
Otranto
Brindisi
Tarentum
Reggio
Messina
Palermo
Trapani
Marsala
Syracuse
Catania
Girgenti
Sardinia
Cagliari
Corsica
Bastia
Ajaccio
Bonifacio
Tunis
Carthage

CHAPTER III.

HENRY THE SECOND.

1154—1189.

YOUNG as he was, and he had reached but his twenty-first year when he returned to England as its King, Henry mounted the throne with a purpose of government which his reign carried steadily out. His practical, serviceable frame suited the hardest worker of his time. There was something in his build and look, in the square stout form, the fiery face, the close-cropped hair, the prominent eyes, the bull neck, the coarse strong hands, the bowed legs, that marked out the keen, stirring, coarse-fibred man of business. "He never sits down," said one who observed him closely; "he is always on his legs from morning till night." Orderly in business, careless of appearance, sparing in diet, never resting or giving his servants rest, chatty, inquisitive, endowed with a singular charm of address and strength of memory, obstinate in love or hatred, a fair scholar, a great hunter, his general air that of a rough, passionate, busy man, Henry's personal character told directly on the character of his reign. His accession marks the period of amalgamation when neighbourhood and traffic and intermarriage drew Englishmen and Normans into a single people. A national feeling was thus springing up before which the barriers of the older feudalism were to be swept away. Henry had even less reverence for the feudal past than the men of his day: he was indeed utterly without the imagination and reverence which enable men to

Henry Fitz-Empress.

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sympathize with any past at all. He had a practical man's impatience of the obstacles thrown in the way of his reforms by the older constitution of the realm, nor could he understand other men's reluctance to purchase undoubted improvements by the sacrifice of customs and traditions of bygone days. Without any theoretical hostility to the co-ordinate powers of the state, it seemed to him a perfectly reasonable and natural course to trample either baronage or Church under foot to gain his end of good government. He saw clearly that the remedy for such anarchy as England had endured under Stephen lay in the establishment of a kingly rule unembarrassed by any privileges of order or class, administered by royal servants, and in whose public administration the nobles acted simply as delegates of the sovereign. His work was to lie in the organization of judicial and administrative reforms which realized this idea. But of the currents of thought and feeling which were tending in the same direction he knew nothing. What he did for the moral and social impulses which were telling on men about him was simply to let them alone. Religion grew more and more identified with patriotism under the eyes of a King who whispered, and scribbled, and looked at picture-books during mass, who never confessed, and cursed God in wild frenzies of blasphemy. Great peoples formed themselves on both sides of the sea round a sovereign who bent the whole force of his mind to hold together an Empire which the growth of nationality must inevitably destroy. There is throughout a tragic grandeur in the irony of Henry's position, that of a Sforza of the fifteenth century set in the midst of the twelfth, building up by patience and policy and craft a dominion alien to the deepest sympathies of his age and fated to be swept away in the end by popular forces to whose existence his very cleverness and activity blinded him. But whether by the anti-national temper of his general system or by the administrative reforms of his English rule his policy did more than that of all

his predecessors to prepare England for the unity and freedom which the fall of his house was to reveal.

The Great Scutage.

He had been placed on the throne, as we have seen, by the Church. His first work was to repair the evils which England had endured till his accession by the restoration of the system of Henry the First; and it was with the aid and counsel of Theobald that the foreign marauders were driven from the realm, the new castles demolished in spite of the opposition of the baronage, the King's Court and Exchequer restored. Age and infirmity however warned the Primate to retire from the post of minister, and his power fell into the younger and more vigorous hands of Thomas Beket, who had long acted as his confidential adviser and was now made Chancellor. Thomas won the personal favour of the King. The two young men had, in Theobald's words, "but one heart and mind;" Henry jested in the Chancellor's hall, or tore his cloak from his shoulders in rough horse-play as they rode through the streets. He loaded his favourite with riches and honours, but there is no ground for thinking that Thomas in any degree influenced his system of rule. Henry's policy seems for good or evil to have been throughout his own. His work of reorganization went steadily on amidst troubles at home and abroad. Welsh outbreaks forced him in 1157 to lead an army over the border; and a crushing repulse showed that he was less skilful as a general than as a statesman. The next year saw him drawn across the Channel, where he was already master of a third of the present France. Anjou and Touraine he had inherited from his father, Maine and Normandy from his mother, he governed Britanny through his brother, while the seven provinces of the South, Poitou, Saintonge, Auvergne, Perigord, the Limousin, the Angoumois, and Guienne, belonged to his wife. As Duchess of Aquitaine Eleanor had claims on Toulouse, and these Henry prepared in 1159 to enforce by arms. But the campaign was turned to the profit of his reforms. He had already begun the

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work of bringing the baronage within the grasp of the law by sending judges from the Exchequer year after year to exact the royal dues and administer the King's justice even in castle and manor. He now attacked its military influence. Each man who held lands of a certain value was bound to furnish a knight for his lord's service; and the barons thus held a body of trained soldiers at their disposal. When Henry called his chief lords to serve in the war of Toulouse, he allowed the lower tenants to commute their service for sums payable to the royal treasury under the name of "scutage," or shield-money. The "Great Scutage" did much to disarm the baronage, while it enabled the King to hire foreign mercenaries for his service abroad. Again however he was luckless in war. King Lewis of France threw himself into Toulouse. Conscious of the ill-compacted nature of his wide dominion, Henry shrank from an open contest with his suzerain; he withdrew his forces, and the quarrel ended in 1160 by a formal alliance and the betrothal of his eldest son to the daughter of Lewis.

Archbishop Thomas.

Henry returned to his English realm to regulate the relations of the state with the Church. These rested in the main on the system established by the Conqueror, and with that system Henry had no wish to meddle. But he was resolute that, baron or priest, all should be equal before the law; and he had no more mercy for clerical than for feudal immunities. The immunities of the clergy indeed were becoming a hindrance to public justice. The clerical order in the middle ages extended far beyond the priesthood; it included in Henry's day the whole of the professional and educated classes. It was subject to the jurisdiction of the Church courts alone; but bodily punishment could only be inflicted by officers of the lay courts, and so great had the jealousy between clergy and laity become that the bishops no longer sought civil aid but restricted themselves to the purely spiritual punishments of penance and deprivation of orders. Such

penalties formed no effectual check upon crime, and while preserving the Church courts the King aimed at the delivery of convicted offenders to secular punishment. For the carrying out of these designs he sought an agent in Thomas the Chancellor. Thomas had now been his minister for eight years, and had fought bravely in the war against Toulouse at the head of the seven hundred knights who formed his household. But the King had other work for him than war. On Theobald's death in 1162 he forced on the monks of Canterbury his election as Archbishop. But from the moment of his appointment the dramatic temper of the new Primate flung its whole energy into the part he set himself to play. At the first intimation of Henry's purpose he pointed with a laugh to his gay court attire: "You are choosing a fine dress" he said "to figure at the head of your Canterbury monks;" once monk and Archbishop he passed with a fevered earnestness from luxury to asceticism; and a visit to the Council of Tours in 1163, where the highest doctrines of ecclesiastical authority were sanctioned by Pope Alexander the Third, strengthened his purpose of struggling for the privileges of the Church. His change of attitude encouraged his old rivals at court to vex him with petty law-suits, but no breach had come with the King till Henry proposed that clerical convicts should be punished by the civil power. Thomas refused; he would only consent that a clerk, once degraded, should for after offences suffer like a layman. Both parties appealed to the "customs" of the realm; and it was to state these "customs" that a court was held in 1164 at Clarendon near Marlborough.

Legal Reforms.

The report presented by bishops and barons formed the Constitutions of Clarendon, a code which in the bulk of its provisions simply re-enacted the system of the Conqueror. Every election of bishop or abbot was to take place before royal officers, in the King's chapel, and with the King's assent. The prelate elect was bound to do homage to the King for his lands before consecration,

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and to hold his lands as a barony from the King, subject to all feudal burthens of taxation and attendance in the King's court. No bishop might leave the realm without the royal permission. No tenant in chief or royal servant might be excommunicated, or their land placed under interdict, but by the King's assent. What was new was the legislation respecting ecclesiastical jurisdiction. The King's court was to decide whether a suit between clerk and layman, whose nature was disputed, belonged to the Church courts or the King's. A royal officer was to be present at all ecclesiastical proceedings in order to confine the Bishop's court within its own due limits, and a clerk convicted there passed at once under the civil jurisdiction. An appeal was left from the Archbishop's court to the King's court for defect of justice, but none might appeal to the Papal court save with the King's leave. The privilege of sanctuary in churches and churchyards was repealed, so far as property and not persons was concerned. After a passionate refusal the Primate was at last brought to set his seal to these Constitutions, but his assent was soon retracted, and Henry's savage resentment threw the moral advantage of the position into his opponent's hands. Vexatious charges were brought against Thomas, and he was summoned to answer at a Council held in the autumn at Northampton. All urged him to submit; his very life was said to be in peril from the King's wrath. But in the presence of danger the courage of the man rose to its full height. Grasping his archiepiscopal cross he entered the royal court, forbade the nobles to condemn him, and appealed in the teeth of the Constitutions to the Papal See. Shouts of "Traitor!" followed him as he withdrew. The Primate turned fiercely at the word: "Were I a knight," he shouted back, "my sword should answer that foul taunt!" Once alone however, dread pressed more heavily; he fled in disguise at nightfall and reached France through Flanders.

Great as were the dangers it was to bring with it, the

flight of Thomas left Henry free to carry on the reforms he had planned. In spite of denunciations from Primate and Pope, the Constitutions regulated from this time the relations of the Church with the state. Henry now turned to the actual organization of the realm. His reign, it has been truly said, "initiated the rule of law" as distinct from the despotism, whether personal or tempered by routine, of the Norman sovereigns. It was by successive "assizes" or codes issued with the sanction of the great councils of barons and prelates which he summoned year by year, that he perfected in a system of gradual reforms the administrative measures which Henry the First had begun. The fabric of our judicial legislation commences in 1166 with the Assize of Clarendon, the first object of which was to provide for the order of the realm by reviving the old English system of mutual security or frankpledge. No stranger might abide in any place save a borough and only there for a single night unless sureties were given for his good behaviour; and the list of such strangers was to be submitted to the itinerant justices. In the provisions of this assize for the repression of crime we find the origin of trial by jury, so often attributed to earlier times. Twelve lawful men of each hundred, with four from each township, were sworn to present those who were known or reputed as criminals within their district for trial by ordeal. The jurors were thus not merely witnesses, but sworn to act as judges also in determining the value of the charge, and it is this double character of Henry's jurors that has descended to our "grand jury," who still remain charged with the duty of presenting criminals for trial after examination of the witnesses against them. Two later steps brought the jury to its modern condition. Under Edward the First witnesses acquainted with the particular fact in question were added in each case to the general jury, and by the separation of these two classes of jurors at a later time the last became simply "witnesses" without any judicial

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power, while the first ceased to be witnesses at all and became our modern jurors, who are only judges of the testimony given. With this assize too a practice which had prevailed from the earliest English times, the practice of "compurgation," passed away. Under this system the accused could be acquitted of the charge by the voluntary oath of his neighbours and kinsmen; but this was abolished by the Assize of Clarendon, and for the fifty years which followed it his trial, after the investigation of the grand jury, was found solely in the ordeal or "judgement of God," where innocence was proved by the power of holding hot iron in the hand or by sinking when flung into the water, for swimming was a proof of guilt. It was the abolition of the whole system of ordeal by the Council of Lateran in 1216 which led the way to the establishment of what is called a "petty jury" for the final trial of prisoners.

Murder of Thomas.

But Henry's work of reorganization had hardly begun when it was broken by the pressure of the strife with the Primate. For six years the contest raged bitterly; at Rome, at Paris, the agents of the two powers intrigued against each other. Henry stooped to acts of the meanest persecution in driving the Primate's kinsmen from England, and in confiscating the lands of their order till the monks of Pontigny should refuse Thomas a home; while Beket himself exhausted the patience of his friends by his violence and excommunications, as well as by the stubbornness with which he clung to the offensive clause "Saving the honour of my order," the addition of which to his consent would have practically neutralized the King's reforms. The Pope counselled mildness, the French king for a time withdrew his support, his own clerks gave way at last. "Come up," said one of them bitterly when his horse stumbled on the road, "saving the honour of the Church and my order." But neither warning nor desertion moved the resolution of the Primate. Henry, in dread of Papal excommunication,

resolved in 1170 on the coronation of his son: and this office, which belonged to the see of Canterbury, he transferred to the Archbishop of York. But the Pope's hands were now freed by his successes in Italy, and the threat of an interdict forced the King to a show of submission. The Archbishop was allowed to return after a reconciliation with the King at Freteval, and the Kentishmen flocked around him with uproarious welcome as he entered Canterbury. "This is England," said his clerks, as they saw the white headlands of the coast. "You will wish yourself elsewhere before fifty days are gone," said Thomas sadly, and his foreboding showed his appreciation of Henry's character. He was now in the royal power, and orders had already been issued in the younger Henry's name for his arrest when four knights from the King's court, spurred to outrage by a passionate outburst of their master's wrath, crossed the sea, and on the 29th of December forced their way into the Archbishop's palace. After a stormy parley with him in his chamber they withdrew to arm. Thomas was hurried by his clerks into the cathedral, but as he reached the steps leading from the transept to the choir his pursuers burst in from the cloisters. "Where," cried Reginald Fitzurse in the dusk of the dimly lighted minster, "where is the traitor, Thomas Beket?" The Primate turned resolutely back: "Here am I, no traitor, but a priest of God," he replied, and again descending the steps he placed himself with his back against a pillar and fronted his foes. All the bravery and violence of his old knightly life seemed to revive in Thomas as he tossed back the threats and demands of his assailants. "You are our prisoner," shouted Fitzurse, and the four knights seized him to drag him from the church. "Do not touch me, Reginald," cried the Primate, "pander that you are, you owe me fealty;" and availing himself of his personal strength he shook him roughly off. "Strike, strike," retorted Fitzurse, and blow after blow struck Thomas to the ground. A retainer of Ranulf de Broc

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with the point of his sword scattered the Primate's brains on the ground. "Let us be off," he cried triumphantly, "this traitor will never rise again."

The Church and Literature.

The brutal murder was received with a thrill of horror throughout Christendom; miracles were wrought at the martyr's tomb; he was canonized, and became the most popular of English saints. The stately "martyrdom" which rose over his relics at Canterbury seemed to embody the triumph which his blood had won. But the contest had in fact revealed a new current of educated opinion which was to be more fatal to the Church than the reforms of the King. Throughout it Henry had been aided by a silent revolution which now began to part the purely literary class from the purely clerical. During the earlier ages of our history we have seen literature springing up in ecclesiastical schools, and protecting itself against the ignorance and violence of the time under ecclesiastical privileges. Almost all our writers from Bæda to the days of the Angevins are clergy or monks. The revival of letters which followed the Conquest was a purely ecclesiastical revival; the intellectual impulse which Bec had given to Normandy travelled across the Channel with the new Norman abbots who were established in the greater English monasteries; and writing-rooms or scriptoria, where the chief works of Latin literature, patristic or classical, were copied and illuminated, the lives of saints compiled, and entries noted in the monastic chronicle, formed from this time a part of every religious house of any importance. But the literature which found this religious shelter was not so much ecclesiastical as secular. Even the philosophical and devotional impulse given by Anselm produced no English work of theology or metaphysics. The literary revival which followed the Conquest took mainly the old historical form. At Durham Turgot and Simeon threw into Latin shape the national annals to the time of Henry the First with an especial regard to northern affairs, while the earlier events of Stephen's reign were noted down by

two Priors of Hexham in the wild border-land between England and the Scots.

These however were the colourless jottings of mere annalists; it was in the Scriptorium of Canterbury, in Osbern's lives of the English saints or in Eadmer's record of the struggle of Anselm against the Red King and his successor that we see the first indications of a distinctively English feeling telling on the new literature. The national impulse is yet more conspicuous in the two historians that followed. The war-songs of the English conquerors of Britain were preserved by Henry, an Archdeacon of Huntingdon, who wove them into annals compiled from Bæda and the Chronicle; while William, the librarian of Malmesbury, as industriously collected the lighter ballads which embodied the popular traditions of the English Kings. It is in William above all others that we see the new tendency of English literature. In himself, as in his work, he marks the fusion of the conquerors and the conquered, for he was of both English and Norman parentage and his sympathies were as divided as his blood. The form and style of his writings show the influence of those classical studies which were now reviving throughout Christendom. Monk as he is, William discards the older ecclesiastical models and the annalistic form. Events are grouped together with no strict reference to time, while the lively narrative flows rapidly and loosely along with constant breaks of digression over the general history of Europe and the Church. It is in this change of historic spirit that William takes his place as first of the more statesmanlike and philosophic school of historians who began to arise in direct connexion with the Court, and among whom the author of the chronicle which commonly bears the name of "Benedict of Peterborough" with his continuator Roger of Howden are the most conspicuous. Both held judicial offices under Henry the Second, and it is to their position at Court that they owe the fulness and accuracy of their

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information as to affairs at home and abroad, as well as their copious supply of official documents. What is noteworthy in these writers is the purely political temper with which they regard the conflict of Church and State in their time. But the English court had now become the centre of a distinctly secular literature. The treatise of Ranulf de Glanvill, a justiciar of Henry the Second, is the earliest work on English law, as that of the royal treasurer, Richard Fitz-Neal, on the Exchequer is the earliest on English government.

Gerald of Wales.

Still more distinctly secular than these, though the work of a priest who claimed to be a bishop, are the writings of Gerald de Barri. Gerald is the father of our popular literature as he is the originator of the political and ecclesiastical pamphlet. Welsh blood (as his usual name of Giraldus Cambrensis implies) mixed with Norman in his veins, and something of the restless Celtic fire runs alike through his writings and his life. A busy scholar at Paris, a reforming Archdeacon in Wales, the wittiest of Court chaplains, the most troublesome of bishops, Gerald became the gayest and most amusing of all the authors of his time. In his hands the stately Latin tongue took the vivacity and picturesqueness of the jongleur's verse. Reared as he had been in classic studies, he threw pedantry contemptuously aside. "It is better to be dumb than not to be understood," is his characteristic apology for the novelty of his style: "new times require new fashions, and so I have thrown utterly aside the old and dry method of some authors and aimed at adopting the fashion of speech which is actually in vogue to-day." His tract on the conquest of Ireland and his account of Wales, which are in fact reports of two journeys undertaken in those countries with John and Archbishop Baldwin, illustrate his rapid faculty of careless observation, his audacity, and his good sense. They are just the sort of lively, dashing letters that we find in the correspondence of a modern journal. There is the same

modern tone in his political pamphlets; his profusion of jests, his fund of anecdote, the aptness of his quotations, his natural shrewdness and critical acumen, the clearness and vivacity of his style, are backed by a fearlessness and impetuosity that made him a dangerous assailant even to such a ruler as Henry the Second. The invectives in which Gerald poured out his resentment against the Angevins are the cause of half the scandal about Henry and his sons which has found its way into history. His life was wasted in an ineffectual attempt to secure the see of St. David's, but his pungent pen played its part in rousing the nation to its later struggle with the Crown.

Romance.

A tone of distinct hostility to the Church developed itself almost from the first among the singers of romance. Romance had long before taken root in the court of Henry the First, where under the patronage of Queen Maud the dreams of Arthur, so long cherished by the Celts of Britanny, and which had travelled to Wales in the train of the exile Rhys ap Tewdor, took shape in the History of the Britons by Geoffry of Monmouth. Myth, legend, tradition, the classical pedantry of the day, Welsh hopes of future triumph over the Saxon, the memories of the Crusades and of the world-wide dominion of Charles the Great, were mingled together by this daring fabulist in a work whose popularity became at once immense. Alfred of Beverly transferred Geoffry's inventions into the region of sober history, while two Norman *trouveurs*, Gaimar and Wace, translated them into French verse. So complete was the credence they obtained that Arthur's tomb at Glastonbury was visited by Henry the Second while the child of his son Geoffry and of Constance of Britanny received the name of the Celtic hero. Out of Geoffry's creation grew little by little the poem of the Table Round. Britanny, which had mingled with the story of Arthur the older and more mysterious legend of the Enchanter Merlin, lent that of Lancelot to the wandering

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minstrels of the day, who moulded it as they wandered from hall to hall into the familiar tale of knighthood wrested from its loyalty by the love of woman. The stories of Tristram and Gawayne, at first as independent as that of Lancelot, were drawn with it into the whirlpool of Arthurian romance; and when the Church, jealous of the popularity of the legends of chivalry, invented as a counteracting influence the poem of the Sacred Dish, the San Graal which held the blood of the Cross invisible to all eyes but those of the pure in heart, the genius of a Court poet, Walter de Map, wove the rival legends together, sent Arthur and his knights wandering over sea and land in quest of the San Graal, and crowned the work by the figure of Sir Galahad, the type of ideal knighthood, without fear and without reproach.

Walter de Map.

Walter stands before us as the representative of a sudden outburst of literary, social, and religious criticism which followed this growth of romance and the appearance of a freer historical tone in the court of the two Henries. Born on the Welsh border, a student at Paris, a favourite with the King, a royal chaplain, justiciary, and ambassador, his genius was as various as it was prolific. He is as much at his ease in sweeping together the chit-chat of the time in his "Courtly Trifles" as in creating the character of Sir Galahad. But he only rose to his fullest strength when he turned from the fields of romance to that of Church reform and embodied the ecclesiastical abuses of his day in the figure of his "Bishop Goliath." The whole spirit of Henry and his Court in their struggle with Thomas is reflected and illustrated in the apocalypse and confession of this imaginary prelate. Picture after picture strips the veil from the corruption of the mediæval Church, its indolence, its thirst for gain, its secret immorality. The whole body of the clergy from Pope to hedge-priest is painted as busy in the chase for gain; what escapes the bishop is snapped up by the archdeacon, what escapes the archdeacon is nosed and hunted down by

[illegible] while a host of minor officials prowl hungry around these greater harpanders. Out of the crowd of figures which fills the canvas of the satirist, pluralist priests, abbots "purple as their wines," monks feeding and quarrelling together like parrots in the refectory, rises the Flattering Bishop, light of purpose, void of conscience, lost in sensuality, drunken, unchaste, the Goliath who sums up the enormities of all, and against whose forehead this new David slings his sharp pebble of the brook.

It would be in the highest degree unjust to treat such invectives as sober history, or to judge the Church of the twelfth century by the taunts of Walter de Map. What writings such as his bring home to us is the upgrowth of a new literary class, not only standing apart from the Church but regarding it with a hardly disguised ill-will, and breaking down the unquestioning reverence with which men had till now regarded it by their sarcasm and abuse. The tone of intellectual contempt which begins with Walter de Map goes deepening on till it culminates in Chaucer and passes into the open revolt of the Lollard. But even in these early days we can hardly doubt that it gave Henry strength in his contest with the Church. So little indeed did he suffer from the murder of Archbishop Thomas that [illegible]

intercourse with England which had ceased since the eighth century was to some extent renewed in the eleventh. Cut off from the Church of the island by national antipathy, the Danish coast-cities applied to the See of Canterbury for the ordination of their bishops, and acknowledged a right of spiritual supervision in Lanfranc and Anselm. The relations thus formed were drawn closer by a slave-trade between the two countries which the Conqueror and Bishop Wulfstan succeeded for a time in suppressing at Bristol but which appears to have quickly revived. At the time of Henry the Second's accession Ireland was full of Englishmen who had been kidnapped and sold into slavery in spite of royal prohibitions and the spiritual menaces of the English Church. The slave-trade afforded a legitimate pretext for war, had a pretext been needed by the ambition of Henry the Second; and within a few months of that King's coronation John of Salisbury was despatched to obtain the Papal sanction for an invasion of the island. The enterprize, as it was laid before Pope Hadrian IV., took the colour of a crusade. The isolation of Ireland from the general body of Christendom, the absence of learning and civilization, the scandalous vices of its people, were alleged as the

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the people of Ireland should receive Henry with all honour, and revere him as their lord.

The Papal bull was produced in a great council of the English baronage, but the opposition was strong enough to force on Henry a temporary abandonment of his designs, and fourteen years passed before the scheme was brought to life again by the flight of Dermod, King of Leinster, to Henry's court. Dermod had been driven from his dominions in one of the endless civil wars which devastated the island; he now did homage for his kingdom to Henry, and returned to Ireland with promises of aid from the English knighthood. He was followed in 1169 by Robert FitzStephen, a son of the Constable of Cardigan, with a little band of a hundred and forty knights, sixty men-at-arms, and three or four hundred Welsh archers. Small as was the number of the adventurers, their horses and arms proved irresistible by the Irish kernes; a sally of the men of Wexford was avenged by the storm of their town; the Ossory clans were defeated with a terrible slaughter, and Dermod, seizing a head from the heap of trophies which his men piled at his feet, tore off in savage triumph its nose and lips with his teeth. The arrival of fresh forces heralded the coming of Richard of Clare, Earl of Pembroke and Striguil, a ruined baron who bore the nickname of Strongbow, and who in defiance of Henry's prohibition landed near Waterford with a force of fifteen hundred men as Dermod's mercenary. The city was at once stormed, and the united forces of the Earl and King marched to the siege of Dublin. In spite of a relief attempted by the King of Connaught, who was recognized as overking of the island by the rest of the tribes, Dublin was taken by surprize; and the marriage of Richard with Eva, Dermod's daughter, left the Earl on the death of his father-in-law which followed quickly on these successes master of his kingdom of Leinster. The new lord had soon however to hurry back to England and appease the jealousy of Henry by the surrender of Dublin to the

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Crown, by doing homage for Leinster as an English lordship, and by accompanying the King in 1171 on a voyage to the new dominion which the adventurers had won.

Revolt of the younger Henry.

Had fate suffered Henry to carry out his purpose, the conquest of Ireland would now have been accomplished. The King of Connaught indeed and the chiefs of Ulster refused him homage, but the rest of the Irish tribes owned his suzerainty; the bishops in synod at Cashel recognized him as their lord; and he was preparing to penetrate to the north and west, and to secure his conquest by a systematic erection of castles throughout the country, when the need of making terms with Rome, whose interdict threatened to avenge the murder of Archbishop Thomas, recalled him in the spring of 1172 to Normandy. Henry averted the threatened sentence by a show of submission. The judicial provisions in the Constitutions of Clarendon were in form annulled, and liberty of election was restored in the case of bishopricks and abbacies. In reality however the victory rested with the King. Throughout his reign ecclesiastical appointments remained practically in his hands and the King's Court asserted its power over the spiritual jurisdiction of the bishops. But the strife with Thomas had roused into active life every element of danger which surrounded Henry, the envious dread of his neighbours, the disaffection of his own house, the disgust of the barons at the repeated blows which he levelled at their military and judicial power. The King's withdrawal of the office of sheriff from the great nobles of the shire to entrust it to the lawyers and courtiers who already furnished the staff of the royal judges quickened the resentment of the baronage into revolt. His wife Eleanor, now parted from Henry by a bitter hate, spurred her eldest son, whose coronation had given him the title of king, to demand possession of the English realm. On his father's refusal the boy sought refuge with Lewis of France, and his flight was the signal

for a vast rising. France, Flanders, and Scotland joined in league against Henry; his younger sons, Richard and Geoffry, took up arms in Aquitaine, while the Earl of Leicester sailed from Flanders with an army of mercenaries to stir up England to revolt. The Earl's descent ended in a crushing defeat near St. Edmundsbury at the hands of the King's justiciars; but no sooner had the French king entered Normandy and invested Rouen than the revolt of the baronage burst into flame. The Scots crossed the border, Roger Mowbray rose in Yorkshire, Ferrars, Earl of Derby, in the midland shires, Hugh Bigod in the eastern counties, while a Flemish fleet prepared to support the insurrection by a descent upon the coast. The murder of Archbishop Thomas still hung round Henry's neck, and his first act in hurrying to England to meet these perils in 1174 was to prostrate himself before the shrine of the new martyr and to submit to a public scourging in expiation of his sin. But the penance was hardly wrought when all danger was dispelled by a series of triumphs. The King of Scotland, William the Lion, surprized by the English under cover of a mist, fell into the hands of the justiciary, Ranulf de Glanvill, and at the retreat of the Scots the English rebels hastened to lay down their arms. With the army of mercenaries which he had brought over sea Henry was able to return to Normandy, to raise the siege of Rouen, and to reduce his sons to submission.

Later reforms.

Through the next ten years Henry's power was at its height. The French King was cowed. The Scotch King bought his release in 1175 by owning Henry's suzerainty. The Scotch barons did homage, and English garrisons manned the strongest of the Scotch castles. In England itself church and baronage were alike at the King's mercy. Eleanor was imprisoned: and the younger Henry, though always troublesome, remained powerless to do harm. The King availed himself of this rest from outer foes to push forward his judicial and administrative organization. At the outset of his reign he had restored the King's court and

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the occasional circuits of its justices; but the revolt was hardly over when in 1176 the Assize of Northampton rendered this institution permanent and regular by dividing the kingdom into six districts, to each of which three itinerant judges were assigned. The circuits thus marked out correspond roughly with those that still exist. The primary object of these circuits was financial; but the rendering of the King's justice went on side by side with the exaction of the King's dues, and this carrying of justice to every corner of the realm was made still more effective by the abolition of all feudal exemptions from the royal jurisdiction. The chief danger of the new system lay in the opportunities it afforded to judicial corruption; and so great were its abuses, that in 1178 Henry was forced to restrict for a while the number of justices to five, and to reserve appeals from their court to himself in council. The Court of Appeal which was thus created, that of the King in Council, gave birth as time went on to tribunal after tribunal. It is from it that the judicial powers now exercized by the Privy Council are derived, as well as the equitable jurisdiction of the Chancellor. In the next century it became the Great Council of the realm, and it is from this Great Council, in its two distinct capacities, that the Privy Council drew its legislative, and the House of Lords its judicial character. The Court of Star Chamber and the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council are later offshoots of Henry's Court of Appeal. From the judicial organization of the realm, he turned to its military organization, and in 1181 an Assize of Arms restored the national fyrd or militia to the place which it had lost at the Conquest. The substitution of scutage for military service had freed the crown from its dependence on the baronage and its feudal retainers; the Assize of Arms replaced this feudal organization by the older obligation of every freeman to serve in defence of the realm. Every knight was now bound to appear in coat of mail and with shield and lance, every freeholder

with lance and hauberk, every burgess and poorer freeman with lance and helmet, at the King's call. The levy of an armed nation was thus placed wholly at the disposal of the Crown for purposes of defence.

Henry's Death.

A fresh revolt of the younger Henry with his brother Geoffry in 1183 hardly broke the current of Henry's success. The revolt ended with the young King's death, and in 1186 this was followed by the death of Geoffry. Richard, now his father's heir, remained busy in Aquitaine; and Henry was himself occupied with plans for the recovery of Jerusalem, which had been taken by Saladin in 1187. The "Saladin tithe," a tax levied on all goods and chattels, and memorable as the first English instance of taxation on personal property, was granted to the King at the opening of 1188 to support his intended Crusade. But the Crusade was hindered by strife which broke out between Richard and the new French King, Philip; and while Henry strove in vain to bring about peace, a suspicion that he purposed to make his youngest son, John, his heir drove Richard to Philip's side. His father, broken in health and spirits, negotiated fruitlessly through the winter, but with the spring of 1189 Richard and the French King suddenly appeared before Le Mans. Henry was driven in headlong flight from the town. Tradition tells how from a height where he halted to look back on the burning city, so dear to him as his birthplace, the King hurled his curse against God: "Since Thou hast taken from me the town I loved best, where I was born and bred, and where my father lies buried, I will have my revenge on Thee too—I will rob Thee of that thing Thou lovest most in me." If the words were uttered, they were the frenzied words of a dying man. Death drew Henry to the home of his race, but Tours fell as he lay at Saumur, and the hunted King was driven to beg mercy from his foes. They gave him the list of the conspirators against him: at its head was the name of one, his love for whom had brought with it the ruin that was crushing him, his

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youngest son, John. "Now," he said, as he turned his face to the wall, "let things go as they will—I care no more for myself or for the world." The end was come at last. Henry was borne to Chinon by the silvery waters of Vienne, and muttering, "Shame, shame on a conquered King," passed sullenly away.

CHAPTER IV.

THE ANGEVIN KINGS.

1189—1204.

THE fall of Henry the Second only showed the strength of the system he had built up on this side the sea. In the hands of the Justiciar, Ranulf de Glanvill, England remained peaceful through the last stormy months of his reign, and his successor Richard found it undisturbed when he came for his crowning in the autumn of 1189. Though born at Oxford, Richard had been bred in Aquitaine; he was an utter stranger to his realm, and his visit was simply for the purpose of gathering money for a Crusade. Sheriffdoms, bishopricks, were sold; even the supremacy over Scotland was bought back again by William the Lion; and it was with the wealth which these measures won that Richard made his way in 1190 to Marseilles and sailed thence to Messina. Here he found his army and a host under King Philip of France; and the winter was spent in quarrels between the two Kings and a strife between Richard and Tancred of Sicily. In the spring of 1191 his mother Eleanor arrived with ill news from England. Richard had left the realm under the regency of two bishops, Hugh Puiset of Durham and William Longchamp of Ely; but before quitting France he had entrusted it wholly to the latter, who stood at the head of Church and State as at once Justiciar and Papal Legate. Longchamp was loyal to the King, but his exactions and scorn of Englishmen roused a fierce hatred among the baronage, and this hatred found a head in John. While

John and Longchamp.

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richly gifting his brother with earldoms and lands, Richard had taken oath from him that he would quit England for three years. But tidings that the Justiciar was striving to secure the succession of Arthur, the child of his elder brother Geoffry and of Constance of Britanny, to the English crown at once recalled John to the realm, and peace between him and Longchamp was only preserved by the influence of the queen-mother Eleanor. Richard met these news by sending William of Coutances, the Archbishop of Rouen, with full but secret powers to England. On his landing in the summer of 1191 William found the country already in arms. No battle had been fought, but John had seized many of the royal castles, and the indignation stirred by Longchamp's arrest of Archbishop Geoffry of York, a bastard son of Henry the Second, called the whole baronage to the field. The nobles swore fealty to John as Richard's successor, and William of Coutances saw himself forced to show his commission as Justiciar, and to assent to Longchamp's exile from the realm.

Richard.

The tidings of this revolution reached Richard in the Holy Land. He had landed at Acre in the summer and joined with the French King in its siege. But on the surrender of the town Philip at once sailed home, while Richard, marching from Acre to Joppa, pushed inland to Jerusalem. The city however was saved by false news of its strength, and through the following winter and the spring of 1192 the King limited his activity to securing the fortresses of southern Palestine. In June he again advanced on Jerusalem, but the revolt of his army forced him a second time to fall back, and news of Philip's intrigues with John drove him to abandon further efforts. There was need to hasten home. Sailing for speed's sake in a merchant vessel, he was driven by a storm on the Adriatic coast, and while journeying in disguise overland arrested in December at Vienna by his personal enemy, Duke Leopold of Austria. Through the whole year John, in disgust at his

displacement by William of Coutances, had been plotting fruitlessly with Philip. But the news of this capture at once roused both to activity. John secured his castles and seized Windsor, giving out that the King would never return; while Philip strove to induce the Emperor, Henry the Sixth, to whom the Duke of Austria had given Richard up, to retain his captive. But a new influence now appeared on the scene. The see of Canterbury was vacant, and Richard from his prison bestowed it on Hubert Walter, the Bishop of Salisbury, a nephew of Ranulf de Glanvill and who had acted as secretary to Bishop Longchamp. Hubert's ability was seen in the skill with which he held John at bay and raised the enormous ransom which Henry demanded, the whole people, clergy as well as lay, paying a fourth of their moveable goods. To gain his release however Richard was forced besides this payment of ransom to do homage to the Emperor, not only for the kingdom of Arles with which Henry invested him but for England itself, whose crown he resigned into the Emperor's hands and received back as a fief. But John's open revolt made even these terms welcome, and Richard hurried to England in the spring of 1194. He found the rising already quelled by the decision with which the Primate led an army against John's castles, and his landing was followed by his brother's complete submission.

Richard and Philip.

The firmness of Hubert Walter had secured order in England, but oversea Richard found himself face to face with dangers which he was too clear-sighted to undervalue. Destitute of his father's administrative genius, less ingenious in his political conceptions than John, Richard was far from being a mere soldier. A love of adventure, a pride in sheer physical strength, here and there a romantic generosity, jostled roughly with the craft, the unscrupulousness, the violence of his race; but he was at heart a statesman, cool and patient in the execution of his plans as he was bold in their conception. "The devil is loose; take care

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of yourself," Philip had written to John at the news of Richard's release. In the French King's case a restless ambition was spurred to action by insults which he had borne during the Crusade. He had availed himself of Richard's imprisonment to invade Normandy, while the lords of Aquitaine rose in open revolt under the troubadour Bertrand de Born. Jealousy of the rule of strangers, weariness of the turbulence of the mercenary soldiers of the Angevins or of the greed and oppression of their financial administration, combined with an impatience of their firm government and vigorous justice to alienate the nobles of their provinces on the Continent. Loyalty among the people there was none; even Anjou, the home of their race, drifted towards Philip as steadily as Poitou. But in warlike ability Richard was more than Philip's peer. He held him in check on the Norman frontier and surprized his treasure at Freteval while he reduced to submission the rebels of Aquitaine. Hubert Walter gathered vast sums to support the army of mercenaries which Richard led against his foes. The country groaned under its burdens, but it owned the justice and firmness of the Primate's rule, and the measures which he took to procure money with as little oppression as might be proved steps in the education of the nation in its own self-government. The taxes were assessed by a jury of sworn knights at each circuit of the justices; the grand jury of the county was based on the election of knights in the hundred courts; and the keeping of pleas of the crown was taken from the sheriff and given to a newly elected officer, the coroner. In these elections were found at a later time precedents for parliamentary representation; in Hubert's mind they were doubtless intended to do little more than reconcile the people to the crushing taxation. His work poured a million into the treasury, and enabled Richard during a short truce to detach Flanders by his bribes from the French alliance, and to unite the Counts of Chartres, Champagne, and Boulogne with the Bretons in a revolt against Philip.

He won a yet more valuable aid in the election of his nephew Otto of Saxony, a son of Henry the Lion, to the German throne, and his envoy William Longchamp knitted an alliance which would bring the German lances to bear on the King of Paris.

Château Gaillard.

But the security of Normandy was requisite to the success of these wider plans, and Richard saw that its defence could no longer rest on the loyalty of the Norman people. His father might trace his descent through Matilda from the line of Rolf, but the Angevin ruler was in fact a stranger to the Norman. It was impossible for a Norman to recognize his Duke with any real sympathy in the Angevin prince whom he saw moving along the border at the head of Brabançon mercenaries, in whose camp the old names of the Norman baronage were missing and Merchadé, a Gascon ruffian, held supreme command. The purely military site that Richard selected for a new fortress with which he guarded the border showed his realization of the fact that Normandy could now only be held by force of arms. As a monument of warlike skill his "Saucy Castle," Château Gaillard, stands first among the fortresses of the middle ages. Richard fixed its site where the Seine bends suddenly at Gaillon in a great semicircle to the north, and where the valley of Les Andelys breaks the line of the chalk cliffs along its banks. Blue masses of woodland crown the distant hills; within the river curve lies a dull reach of flat meadow, round which the Seine, broken with green islets and dappled with the grey and blue of the sky, flashes like a silver bow on its way to Rouen. The castle formed part of an entrenched camp which Richard designed to cover his Norman capital. Approach by the river was blocked by a stockade and a bridge of boats, by a fort on the islet in mid stream, and by a tower which the King built in the valley of the Gambon, then an impassable marsh. In the angle between this valley and the Seine, on a spur of the chalk hills which only a narrow neck of land connects with the general

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plateau, rose at the height of three hundred feet above the river the crowning fortress of the whole. Its outworks and the walls which connected it with the town and stockade have for the most part gone, but time and the hand of man have done little to destroy the fortifications themselves—the fosse, hewn deep into the solid rock, with casemates hollowed out along its sides, the fluted walls of the citadel, the huge donjon looking down on the brown roofs and huddled gables of Les Andelys. Even now in its ruin we can understand the triumphant outburst of its royal builder as he saw it rising against the sky: "How pretty a child is mine, this child of but one year old!"

Richard's death.

The easy reduction of Normandy on the fall of Château Gaillard at a later time proved Richard's foresight; but foresight and sagacity were mingled in him with a brutal violence and a callous indifference to honour. "I would take it, were its walls of iron," Philip exclaimed in wrath as he saw the fortress rise. "I would hold it, were its walls of butter," was the defiant answer of his foe. It was Church land and the Archbishop of Rouen laid Normandy under interdict at its seizure, but the King met the interdict with mockery, and intrigued with Rome till the censure was withdrawn. He was just as defiant of a "rain of blood," whose fall scared his courtiers. "Had an angel from heaven bid him abandon his work," says a cool observer, "he would have answered with a curse." The twelvemonth's hard work, in fact, by securing the Norman frontier set Richard free to deal his long-planned blow at Philip. Money only was wanting; for England had at last struck against the continued exactions. In 1198 Hugh, Bishop of Lincoln, brought nobles and bishops to refuse a new demand for the maintenance of foreign soldiers, and Hubert Walter resigned in despair. A new justiciar, Geoffry Fitz-Peter, Earl of Essex, extorted some money by a harsh assize of the forests; but the exchequer was soon drained, and Richard listened with more than the greed of his race to rumours that a treasure had been

found in the fields of the Limousin. Twelve knights of gold seated round a golden table were the find, it was said, of the Lord of Chaluz. Treasure-trove at any rate there was, and in the spring of 1199 Richard prowled around the walls. But the castle held stubbornly out till the King's greed passed into savage menace. He would hang all, he swore—man, woman, the very child at the breast. In the midst of his threats an arrow from the walls struck him down. He died as he had lived, owning the wild passion which for seven years past had kept him from confession lest he should be forced to pardon Philip, forgiving with kingly generosity the archer who had shot him.

Loss of Normandy.

The Angevin dominion broke to pieces at his death. John was acknowledged as King in England and Normandy, Aquitaine was secured for him by its Duchess, his mother Eleanor; but Anjou, Maine, and Touraine did homage to Arthur, the son of his elder brother Geoffry, the late Duke of Britanny. The ambition of Philip, who protected his cause, turned the day against Arthur; the Angevins rose against the French garrisons with which the French King practically annexed the country, and in May 1200 a treaty between the two kings left John master of the whole dominion of his house. But fresh troubles broke out in Poitou; Philip, on John's refusal to answer the charges of the Poitevin barons at his Court, declared in 1202 his fiefs forfeited; and Arthur, now a boy of fifteen, strove to seize Eleanor in the castle of Mirabeau. Surprized at its siege by a rapid march of the King, the boy was taken prisoner to Rouen, and murdered there in the spring of 1203, as men believed, by his uncle's hand. This brutal outrage at once roused the French provinces in revolt, while Philip sentenced John to forfeiture as a murderer and marched straight on Normandy. The ease with which the conquest of the Duchy was effected can only be explained by the utter absence of any popular resistance on the part of the Normans themselves. Half a century before the sight of a Frenchman in the land

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would have roused every peasant to arms from Avranches to Dieppe. But town after town surrendered at the mere summons of Philip, and the conquest was hardly over before Normandy settled down into the most loyal of the provinces of France. Much of this was due to the wise liberality with which Philip met the claims of the towns to independence and self-government, as well as to the overpowering force and military ability with which the conquest was effected. But the utter absence of opposition sprang from a deeper cause. To the Norman his transfer from John to Philip was a mere passing from one foreign master to another, and foreigner for foreigner Philip was the less alien of the two. Between France and Normandy there had been as many years of friendship as of strife; between Norman and Angevin lay a century of bitterest hate. Moreover, the subjection to France was the realization in fact of a dependence which had always existed in theory; Philip entered Rouen as the over-lord of its Dukes; while the submission to the house of Anjou had been the most humiliating of all submissions, the submission to an equal. In 1204 Philip turned on the south with as startling a success. Maine, Anjou, and Touraine passed with little resistance into his hands, and the death of Eleanor was followed by the submission of the bulk of Aquitaine. Little was left save the country south of the Garonne; and from the lordship of a vast empire that stretched from the Tyne to the Pyrenees John saw himself reduced at a blow to the realm of England.

BOOK III.

THE CHARTER.

1204—1291.

ROYAL ASIATIC SOCIETY OF THE BOMBAY BRANCH

AUTHORITIES FOR BOOK III.

1204—1291.

A chronicle drawn up at the monastery of Barnwell near Cambridge, and which has been embodied in the "Memoriale" of Walter of Coventry, gives us a contemporary account of the period from 1201 to 1225. We possess another contemporary annalist for the same period in Roger of Wendover, the first of the published chroniclers of St. Albans, whose work extends to 1235. Though full of detail Roger is inaccurate, and he has strong royal and ecclesiastical sympathies; but his chronicle was subsequently revised in a more patriotic sense by another monk of the same abbey, Matthew Paris, and continued in the "Greater Chronicle" of the latter.

Matthew has left a parallel but shorter account of the time in his "Historia Anglorum" (from the Conquest to 1253). He is the last of the great chroniclers of his house; for the chronicles of Rishanger, his successor at St. Albans, and of the obscurer annalists who worked on at that Abbey till the Wars of the Roses are little save scant and lifeless jottings of events which become more and more local as time goes on. The annals of the abbeys of Waverley, Dunstable, and Burton, which have been published in the "Annales Monastici" of the Rolls series, add important details for the reigns of John and Henry III. Those of Melrose, Osney, and Lanercost help us in the close of the latter reign, where help is especially welcome. For the Barons' war we have besides these the royalist chronicle of Wykes, Rishanger's fragment published by the Camden Society, and a chronicle of Bartholomew de Cotton, which is contemporary from 1264 to 1298. Where the chronicles fail however the public documents of the realm become of high importance. The "Royal Letters" (1216—1272) which have been printed from the Patent Rolls by Professor Shirley (Rolls Series) throw great light on Henry's politics.

Our municipal history during this period is fully represented by that of London. For the general history of the capital the Rolls series has given us its "Liber Albus" and "Liber Custumarum," while a vivid account of its communal revolution is to be found in the "Liber de Antiquis Legibus" published by the Camden Society. A store of documents will be found in the Charter Rolls published by the Record Commission, in Brady's work on "English Boroughs," and in the

"Ordinances of English Gilds," published with a remarkable preface from the pen of Dr. Brentano by the Early English Text Society. For our religious and intellectual history materials now become abundant. Grosseteste's Letters throw light on the state of the Church and its relations with Rome; those of Adam Marsh give us interesting details of Earl Simon's relation to the religious movement of his day; and Eccleston's tract on the arrival of the Friars is embodied in the "Monumenta Franciscana." For the Universities we have the collection of materials edited by Mr. Anstey under the name of "Munimenta Academica."

With the close of Henry's reign our directly historic materials become scantier and scantier. The monastic annals we have before mentioned are supplemented by the jejune entries of Trivet and Murimuth, by the "Annales Angliæ et Scotiæ," by Rishanger's Chronicle, his "Gesta Edwardi Primi," and three fragments of his annals (all published in the Rolls Series). The portion of the so-called "Walsingham's History" which relates to this period is now attributed by Mr. Riley to Rishanger's hand. For the wars in the north and in the west we have no records from the side of the conquered. The social and physical state of Wales indeed is illustrated by the "Itinerarium" which Gerald du Barri drew up in the twelfth century, but Scotland has no contemporary chronicles for this period; the jingling rimes of Blind Harry are two hundred years later than his here, Wallace. We possess however a copious collection of State papers in the "Rotuli Scotiæ," the "Documents and Records illustrative of the History of Scotland" which were edited by Sir F. Palgrave, as well as in Rymer's Fœdera. For the history of our Parliament the most noteworthy materials have been collected by Professor Stubbs in his Select Charters, and he has added to them a short treatise called "Modus Tenendi Parliamenta," which may be taken as a fair account of its actual state and powers in the fourteenth century.

CHAPTER I.

JOHN.

1214—1216.

England and the Conquest.

THE loss of Normandy did more than drive John from the foreign dominions of his race; it set him face to face with England itself. England was no longer a distant treasure-house from which gold could be drawn for wars along the Epte or the Loire, no longer a possession to be kept in order by wise ministers and by flying visits from its foreign King. Henceforth it was his home. It was to be ruled by his personal and continuous rule. People and sovereign were to know each other, to be brought into contact with each other as they had never been brought since the conquest of the Norman. The change in the attitude of the king was the more momentous that it took place at a time when the attitude of the country itself was rapidly changing. The Norman Conquest had given a new aspect to the land. A foreign king ruled it through foreign ministers. Foreign nobles were quartered in every manor. A military organization of the country changed while it simplified the holding of every estate. Huge castles of white stone bridled town and country; huge stone minsters told how the Norman had bridled even the Church. But the change was in great measure an external one. The real life of the nation was little affected by the shock of the Conquest. English institutions, the local, judicial, and administrative forms of the country were the same as of old. Like the English tongue they remained practically

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unaltered. For a century after the Conquest only a few new words crept in from the language of the conquerors, and so entirely did the spoken tongue of the nation at large remain unchanged that William himself tried to learn it that he might administer justice to his subjects. Even English literature, banished as it was from the court of the stranger and exposed to the fashionable rivalry of Latin scholars, survived not only in religious works, in poetic paraphrases of gospels and psalms, but in the great monument of our prose, the English Chronicle. It was not till the miserable reign of Stephen that the Chronicle died out in the Abbey of Peterborough. But the "Sayings of Ælfred" show a native literature going on through the reign of Henry the Second, and the appearance of a great work of English verse coincides in point of time with the return of John to his island realm. "There was a priest in the land whose name was Layamon; he was the son of Leovenath; may the Lord be gracious to him! He dwelt at Earnley, a noble church on the bank of Severn (good it seemed to him!) near Radstone, where he read books. It came to mind to him and in his chiefest thought that he would tell the noble deeds of England, what the men were named and whence they came who first had English land." Journeying far and wide over the country, the priest of Earnley found Bæda and Wace, the books too of St. Albin and St. Austin. "Layamon laid down these books and turned the leaves; he beheld them lovingly; may the Lord be gracious to him! Pen he took with finger and wrote a book-skin, and the true words set together, and compressed the three books into one." Layamon's church is now that of Areley, near Bewdley in Worcestershire; his poem was in fact an expansion of Wace's "Brut" with insertions from Bæda. Historically it is worthless; but as a monument of our language it is beyond all price. In more than thirty thousand lines not more than fifty Norman words are to be found. Even the old poetic tradition remains the

same. The alliterative metre of the earlier verse is still only slightly affected by riming terminations; the similes are the few natural similes of Cædmon; the battle-scenes are painted with the same rough, simple joy.

English Patriotism.

Instead of crushing England indeed the Conquest did more than any event that had gone before to build up an English people. All local distinctions, the distinction of Saxon from Mercian, of both from Northumbrian, died away beneath the common pressure of the stranger. The Conquest was hardly over when we see the rise of a new national feeling, of a new patriotism. In his quiet cell at Worcester the monk Florence strives to palliate by excuses of treason or the weakness of rulers the defeats of Englishmen by the Danes. Ælfred, the great name of the English past, gathers round him a legendary worship, and the "Sayings of Ælfred" embody the ideal of an English king. We see the new vigour drawn from this deeper consciousness of national unity in a national action which began as soon as the Conquest had given place to strife among the conquerors. A common hostility to the conquering baronage gave the nation leaders in its foreign sovereigns, and the sword which had been sheathed at Senlac was drawn for triumphs which avenged it. It was under William the Red that English soldiers shouted scorn at the Norman barons who surrendered at Rochester. It was under Henry the First that an English army faced Duke Robert and his foreign knighthood when they landed for a fresh invasion, "not fearing the Normans." It was under the same great King that Englishmen conquered Normandy in turn on the field of Tenchebray. This overthrow of the conquering baronage, this union of the conquered with the King, brought about the fusion of the conquerors in the general body of the English people. As early as the days of Henry the Second the descendants of Norman and Englishman had become indistinguishable. Both found a bond in a common English feeling and English patriotism, in a common hatred of the Angevin and Poitevin

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"foreigners" who streamed into England in the wake of Henry and his sons. Both had profited by the stern discipline of the Norman rule. The wretched reign of Stephen alone broke the long peace, a peace without parallel elsewhere, which in England stretched from the settlement of the Conquest to the return of John. Of her kings' forays along Norman or Aquitanian borders England heard little; she cared less. Even Richard's crusade woke little interest in his island realm. What England saw in her Kings was "the good peace they made in the land." And with peace came a stern but equitable rule, judicial and administrative reforms that carried order and justice to every corner of the land, a wealth that grew steadily in spite of heavy taxation, an immense outburst of material and intellectual activity.

The Universities.

It was with a new English people therefore that John found himself face to face. The nation which he fronted was a nation quickened with a new life and throbbing with a new energy. Not least among the signs of this energy was the upgrowth of our Universities. The establishment of the great schools which bore this name was everywhere throughout Europe a special mark of the impulse which Christendom gained from the crusades. A new fervour of study sprang up in the West from its contact with the more cultured East. Travellers like Adelard of Bath brought back the first rudiments of physical and mathematical science from the schools of Cordova or Bagdad. In the twelfth century a classical revival restored Cæsar and Vergil to the list of monastic studies, and left its stamp on the pedantic style, the profuse classical quotations of writers like William of Malmesbury or John of Salisbury. The scholastic philosophy sprang up in the schools of Paris. The Roman law was revived by the imperialist doctors of Bologna. The long mental inactivity of feudal Europe broke up like ice before a summer's sun. Wandering teachers such as Lanfranc or Anselm crossed sea and land to spread the new power of knowledge. The same spirit

of restlessness, of enquiry, of impatience with the older traditions of mankind either local or intellectual that drove half Christendom to the tomb of its Lord crowded the roads with thousands of young scholars hurrying to the chosen seats where teachers were gathered together. A new power sprang up in the midst of a world which had till now recognized no power but that of sheer brute force. Poor as they were, sometimes even of servile race, the wandering scholars who lectured in every cloister were hailed as "masters" by the crowds at their feet. Abelard was a foe worthy of the threats of councils, of the thunders of the Church. The teaching of a single Lombard was of note enough in England to draw down the prohibition of a King.

Oxford.

Vacarius was probably a guest in the court of Archbishop Theobald where Thomas of London and John of Salisbury were already busy with the study of the Civil Law. But when he opened lectures on it at Oxford he was at once silenced by Stephen, who was at that moment at war with the Church and jealous of the power which the wreck of the royal authority was throwing into Theobald's hands. At this time Oxford stood in the first rank among English towns. Its town church of St. Martin rose from the midst of a huddled group of houses, girded in with massive walls, that lay along the dry upper ground of a low peninsula between the streams of Cherwell and the Thames. The ground fell gently on either side, eastward and westward, to these rivers; while on the south a sharper descent led down across swampy meadows to the ford from which the town drew its name and to the bridge that succeeded it. Around lay a wild forest country, moors such as Cowley and Bullingdon fringing the course of Thames, great woods of which Shotover and Bagley are the relics closing the horizon to the south and east. Though the two huge towers of its Norman castle marked the strategic importance of Oxford as commanding the river valley along which the commerce of Southern England

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mainly flowed, its walls formed the least element in the town's military strength, for on every side but the north it was guarded by the swampy meadows along Cherwell or by an intricate network of streams into which the Thames breaks among the meadows of Osney. From the midst of these meadows rose a mitred abbey of Austin Canons which with the older priory of St. Frideswide gave Oxford some ecclesiastical dignity. The residence of the Norman house of the D'Oillis within its castle, the frequent visits of English kings to a palace without its walls, the presence again and again of important Parliaments, marked its political weight within the realm. The settlement of one of the wealthiest among the English Jewries in the very heart of the town indicated, while it promoted, the activity of its trade. No place better illustrates the transformation of the land in the hands of its Norman masters, the sudden outburst of industrial effort, the sudden expansion of commerce and accumulation of wealth which followed the Conquest. To the west of the town rose one of the stateliest of English castles, and in the meadows beneath the hardly less stately abbey of Osney. In the fields to the north the last of the Norman kings raised his palace of Beaumont. In the southern quarter of the city the canons of St. Frideswide reared the church which still exists as the diocesan cathedral, while the piety of the Norman Castellans rebuilt almost all its parish churches and founded within their new castle walls the church of the Canons of St. George.

Oxford Scholars

We know nothing of the causes which drew students and teachers within the walls of Oxford. It is possible that here as elsewhere a new teacher quickened older educational foundations, and that the cloisters of Osney and St. Frideswide already possessed schools which burst into a larger life under the impulse of Vacarius. As yet however the fortunes of the University were obscured by the glories of Paris. English scholars gathered in thousands round the chairs of William of Champeaux or Abelard. The English took their place as one of the "nations" of

the French University. John of Salisbury became famous as one of the Parisian teachers. Thomas of London wandered to Paris from his school at Merton. But through the peaceful reign of Henry the Second Oxford quietly grew in numbers and repute, and forty years after the visit of Vacarius its educational position was fully established. When Gerald of Wales read his amusing Topography of Ireland to its students the most learned and famous of the English clergy were to be found within its walls. At the opening of the thirteenth century Oxford stood without a rival in its own country while in European celebrity it took rank with the greatest schools of the Western world. But to realize this Oxford of the past we must dismiss from our minds all recollections of the Oxford of the present. In the outer look of the new University there was nothing of the pomp that overawes the freshman as he first paces the "High" or looks down from the gallery of St. Mary's. In the stead of long fronts of venerable colleges, of stately walks beneath immemorial elms, history plunges us into the mean and filthy lanes of a mediæval town. Thousands of boys, huddled in bare lodging-houses, clustering round teachers as poor as themselves in church porch and house porch, drinking, quarrelling, dicing, begging at the corners of the streets, take the place of the brightly-coloured train of doctors and Heads. Mayor and Chancellor struggled in vain to enforce order or peace on this seething mass of turbulent life. The retainers who followed their young lords to the University fought out the feuds of their houses in the streets. Scholars from Kent and scholars from Scotland waged the bitter struggle of North and South. At nightfall roysterer and reveller roamed with torches through the narrow lanes, defying bailiffs, and cutting down burghers at their doors. Now a mob of clerks plunged into the Jewry and wiped off the memory of bills and bonds by sacking a Hebrew house or two. Now a tavern squabble between scholar and townsman widened into a general broil, and the academical

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bell of St. Mary's vied with the town bell of St. Martin's in clanging to arms. Every phase of ecclesiastical controversy or political strife was preluded by some fierce outbreak in this turbulent, surging mob. When England growled at the exactions of the Papacy in the years that were to follow the students besieged a legate in the abbot's house at Osney. A murderous town and gown row preceded the opening of the Barons' War. "When Oxford draws knife," ran an old rime, "England's soon at strife."

Edmund Rich.

But the turbulence and stir was a stir and turbulence of life. A keen thirst for knowledge, a passionate poetry of devotion, gathered thousands round the poorest scholar and welcomed the barefoot friar. Edmund Rich—Archbishop of Canterbury and saint in later days—came about the time we have reached to Oxford, a boy of twelve years old, from a little lane at Abingdon that still bears his name. He found his school in an inn that belonged to the abbey of Eynsham where his father had taken refuge from the world. His mother was a pious woman of the day, too poor to give her boy much outfit besides the hair shirt that he promised to wear every Wednesday; but Edmund was no poorer than his neighbours. He plunged at once into the nobler life of the place, its ardour for knowledge, its mystical piety. "Secretly," perhaps at eventide when the shadows were gathering in the church of St. Mary and the crowd of teachers and students had left its aisles, the boy stood before an image of the Virgin, and placing a ring of gold upon its finger took Mary for his bride. Years of study, broken by a fever that raged among the crowded, noisome streets, brought the time for completing his education at Paris; and Edmund, hand in hand with a brother Robert of his, begged his way as poor scholars were wont to the great school of Western Christendom. Here a damsel, heedless of his tonsure, wooed him so pertinaciously that Edmund consented at last to an assignation; but when he appeared it was in company of grave academical officials who, as the maiden declared in

the hour of penitence which followed, "straightway whipped the offending Eve out of her." Still true to his Virgin bridal, Edmund on his return from Paris became the most popular of Oxford teachers. It is to him that Oxford owes her first introduction to the Logic of Aristotle. We see him in the little room which he hired, with the Virgin's chapel hard by, his grey gown reaching to his feet, ascetic in his devotion, falling asleep in lecture time after a sleepless night of prayer, but gifted with a grace and cheerfulness of manner which told of his French training and a chivalrous love of knowledge that let his pupils pay what they would. "Ashes to ashes, dust to dust," the young tutor would say, a touch of scholarly pride perhaps mingling with his contempt of worldly things, as he threw down the fee on the dusty window-ledge whence a thievish student would sometimes run off with it. But even knowledge brought its troubles; the Old Testament, which with a copy of the Decretals long formed his sole library, frowned down upon a love of secular learning from which Edmund found it hard to wean himself. At last, in some hour of dream, the form of his dead mother floated into the room where the teacher stood among his mathematical diagrams. "What are these?" she seemed to say; and seizing Edmund's right hand, she drew on the palm three circles interlaced, each of which bore the name of a Person of the Christian Trinity. "Be these," she cried, as the figure faded away, "thy diagrams henceforth, my son."

The University and Feudalism.

The story admirably illustrates the real character of the new training, and the latent opposition between the spirit of the Universities and the spirit of the Church. The feudal and ecclesiastical order of the old mediæval world were both alike threatened by this power that had so strangely sprung up in the midst of them. Feudalism rested on local isolation, on the severance of kingdom from kingdom and barony from barony, on the distinction of blood and race, on the supremacy of material or brute force, on an allegiance determined by accidents of place

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and social position. The University on the other hand was a protest against this isolation of man from man. The smallest school was European and not local. Not merely every province of France, but every people of Christendom had its place among the "nations" of Paris or Padua. A common language, the Latin tongue, superseded within academical bounds the warring tongues of Europe. A common intellectual kinship and rivalry took the place of the petty strifes which parted province from province or realm from realm. What Church and Empire had both aimed at and both failed in, the knitting of Christian nations together into a vast commonwealth, the Universities for a time actually did. Dante felt himself as little a stranger in the "Latin" quarter round Mont St. Geneviève as under the arches of Bologna. Wandering Oxford scholars carried the writings of Wyclif to the libraries of Prague. In England the work of provincial fusion was less difficult or important than elsewhere, but even in England work had to be done. The feuds of Northerner and Southerner which so long disturbed the discipline of Oxford witnessed at any rate to the fact that Northerner and Southerner had at last been brought face to face in its streets. And here as elsewhere the spirit of national isolation was held in check by the larger comprehensiveness of the University. After the dissensions that threatened the prosperity of Paris in the thirteenth century Norman and Gascon mingled with Englishmen in Oxford lecture-halls. Irish scholars were foremost in the fray with the legate. At a later time the rising of Owen Glyndwr found hundreds of Welshmen gathered round its teachers. And within this strangely mingled mass society and government rested on a purely democratic basis. Among Oxford scholars the son of the noble stood on precisely the same footing with the poorest mendicant. Wealth, physical strength, skill in arms, pride of ancestry and blood, the very grounds on which feudal society rested, went for nothing in the lecture-room. The University was a state

absolutely self-governed, and whose citizens were admitted by a purely intellectual franchise. Knowledge made the "master." To know more than one's fellows was a man's sole claim to be a regent or "ruler" in the schools. And within this intellectual aristocracy all were equal. When the free commonwealth of the masters gathered in the aisles of St. Mary's all had an equal right to counsel, all had an equal vote in the final decision. Treasury and library were at their complete disposal. It was their voice that named every officer, that proposed and sanctioned every statute. Even the Chancellor, their head, who had at first been an officer of the Bishop, became an elected officer of their own.

The Universities and the Church.

If the democratic spirit of the Universities threatened feudalism, their spirit of intellectual enquiry threatened the Church. To all outer seeming they were purely ecclesiastical bodies. The wide extension which mediæval usage gave to the word "orders" gathered the whole educated world within the pale of the clergy. Whatever might be their age or proficiency, scholar and teacher alike ranked as clerks, free from lay responsibilities or the control of civil tribunals, and amenable only to the rule of the Bishop and the sentence of his spiritual courts. This ecclesiastical character of the University appeared in that of its head. The Chancellor, as we have seen, was at first no officer of the University itself, but of the ecclesiastical body under whose shadow it had sprung into life. At Oxford he was simply the local officer of the Bishop of Lincoln within whose immense diocese the University was then situated. But this identification in outer form with the Church only rendered more conspicuous the difference of spirit between them. The sudden expansion of the field of education diminished the importance of those purely ecclesiastical and theological studies which had hitherto absorbed the whole intellectual energies of mankind. The revival of classical literature, the rediscovery as it were of an older and a greater world, the contact with a larger, freer life whether in mind, in

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society, or in politics introduced a spirit of scepticism, of doubt, of denial into the realms of unquestioning belief. Abelard claimed for reason a supremacy over faith. Florentine poets discussed with a smile the immortality of the soul. Even to Dante, while he censures these, Vergil is as sacred as Jeremiah. The imperial ruler in whom the new culture took its most notable form, Frederick the Second, the "World's Wonder" of his time, was regarded by half Europe as no better than an infidel. A faint revival of physical science, so long crushed as magic by the dominant ecclesiasticism, brought Christians into perilous contact with the Moslem and the Jew. The books of the Rabbis were no longer an accursed thing to Roger Bacon. The scholars of Cordova were no mere Paynim swine to Adelard of Bath. How slowly indeed and against what obstacles science won its way we know from the witness of Roger Bacon. "Slowly," he tells us, "has any portion of the philosophy of Aristotle come into use among the Latins. His Natural Philosophy and his Metaphysics, with the Commentaries of Averroes and others, were translated in my time, and interdicted at Paris up to the year of grace 1237 because of their assertion of the eternity of the world and of time and because of the book of the divinations by dreams (which is the third book, De Somniis et Vigiliis) and because of many passages erroneously translated. Even his logic was slowly received and lectured on. For St. Edmund, the Archbishop of Canterbury, was the first in my time who read the Elements at Oxford. And I have seen Master Hugo, who first read the book of Posterior Analytics and I have seen his writing. So there were but few, considering the multitude of the Latins, who were of any account in the philosophy of Aristotle; nay, very few indeed, and scarcely any up to this year of grace 1292."

The Town.

If we pass from the English University to the English Town we see a progress as important and hardly less interesting. In their origin our boroughs were utterly unlike

those of the rest of the western world. The cities of Italy and Provence had preserved the municipal institutions of their Roman past; the German towns had been founded by Henry the Fowler with the purpose of sheltering industry from the feudal oppression around them; the communes of Northern France sprang into existence in revolt against feudal outrage within their walls. But in England the tradition of Rome passed utterly away, while feudal oppression was held fairly in check by the Crown. The English town therefore was in its beginning simply a piece of the general country, organized and governed precisely in the same manner as the townships around it. Its existence witnessed indeed to the need which men felt in those earlier times of mutual help and protection. The burh or borough was probably a more defensible place than the common village; it may have had a ditch or mound about it instead of the quickset-hedge or "tun" from which the township took its name. But in itself it was simply a township or group of townships where men clustered whether for trade or defence more thickly than elsewhere. The towns were different in the circumstances and date of their rise. Some grew up in the fortified camps of the English invaders. Some dated from a later occupation of the sacked and desolate Roman towns. Some clustered round the country houses of king and ealdorman or the walls of church and monastery. Towns like Bristol were the direct result of trade. There was the same variety in the mode in which the various town communities were formed. While the bulk of them grew by simple increase of population from township to town, larger boroughs such as York with its "six shires" or London with its wards and sokes and franchises show how families and groups of settlers settled down side by side, and claimed as they coalesced, each for itself, its shire or share of the town-ground while jealously preserving its individual life within the town-community. But strange as these aggregations might be, the constitution of the borough which resulted from them

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was simply that of the people at large. Whether we regard it as a township, or rather from its size as a hundred or collection of townships, the obligations of the dwellers within its bounds were those of the townships round, to keep fence and trench in good repair, to send a contingent to the fyrd, and a reeve and four men to the hundred court and shire court. As in other townships land was a necessary accompaniment of freedom. The landless man who dwelled in a borough had no share in its corporate life; for purposes of government or property the town consisted simply of the landed proprietors within its bounds. The common lands which are still attached to many of our boroughs take us back to a time when each township lay within a ring or mark of open ground which served at once as boundary and pasture land. Each of the four wards of York had its common pasture; Oxford has still its own "Portmeadow."

Towns and their lords.

The inner rule of the borough lay as in the townships about it in the hands of its own freemen, gathered in "borough-moot" or "portmannimote." But the social change brought about by the Danish wars, the legal requirement that each man should have a lord, affected the towns as it affected the rest of the country. Some passed into the hands of great thegns near to them; the bulk became known as in the demesne of the king. A new officer, the lord's or king's reeve, was a sign of this revolution. It was the reeve who now summoned the borough-moot and administered justice in it; it was he who collected the lord's dues or annual rent of the town, and who exacted the services it owed to its lord. To modern eyes these services would imply almost complete subjection. When Leicester, for instance, passed from the hands of the Conqueror into those of its Earls, its townsmen were bound to reap their lord's corn-crops, to grind at his mill, to redeem their strayed cattle from his pound. The great forest around was the Earl's, and it was only out of his grace that the little borough could drive its swine into the woods or pasture

its cattle in the glades. The justice and government of a town lay wholly in its master's hands; he appointed its bailiffs, received the fines and forfeitures of his tenants, and the fees and tolls of their markets and fairs. But in fact when once these dues were paid and these services rendered the English townsman was practically free. His rights were as rigidly defined by custom as those of his lord. Property and person alike were secured against arbitrary seizure. He could demand a fair trial on any charge, and even if justice was administered by his master's reeve it was administered in the presence and with the assent of his fellow-townsmen. The bell which swung out from the town tower gathered the burgesses to a common meeting, where they could exercize rights of free speech and free deliberation on their own affairs. Their merchant-gild over its ale-feast regulated trade, distributed the sums due from the town among the different burgesses, looked to the due repairs of gate and wall, and acted in fact pretty much the same part as a town-council of to-day.

The Merchant Gild.

The merchant-gild was the outcome of a tendency to closer association which found support in those principles of mutual aid and mutual restraint that lay at the base of our old institutions. Gilds or clubs for religious, charitable, or social purposes were common throughout the country, and especially common in boroughs, where men clustered more thickly together. Each formed a sort of artificial family. An oath of mutual fidelity among its members was substituted for the tie of blood, while the gild-feast, held once a month in the common hall, replaced the gathering of the kinsfolk round their family hearth. But within this new family the aim of the gild was to establish a mutual responsibility as close as that of the old. "Let all share the same lot," ran its law; "if any misdo, let all bear it." A member could look for aid from his gild-brothers in atoning for guilt incurred by mishap. He could call on them for assistance in case of

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violence or wrong. If falsely accused they appeared in court as his compurgators, if poor they supported, and when dead they buried him. On the other hand he was responsible to them, as they were to the State, for order and obedience to the laws. A wrong of brother against brother was also a wrong against the general body of the gild and was punished by fine or in the last resort by an expulsion which left the offender a "lawless" man and an outcast. The one difference between these gilds in country and town was this, that in the latter case from their close local neighbourhood they tended inevitably to coalesce. Under Æthelstan the London gilds united into one for the purpose of carrying out more effectually their common aims, and at a later time we find the gilds of Berwick enacting "that where many bodies are found side by side in one place they may become one, and have one will, and in the dealings of one with another have a strong and hearty love." The process was probably a long and difficult one, for the brotherhoods naturally differed much in social rank, and even after the union was effected we see traces of the separate existence to a certain extent of some one or more of the wealthier or more aristocratic gilds. In London for instance the Knighten-gild which seems to have stood at the head of its fellows retained for a long time its separate property, while its Alderman—as the chief officer of each gild was called—became the Alderman of the united gild of the whole city. In Canterbury we find a similar gild of Thanes from which the chief officers of the town seem commonly to have been selected. Imperfect however as the union might be, when once it was effected the town passed from a mere collection of brotherhoods into a powerful community, far more effectually organized than in the loose organization of the township, and whose character was inevitably determined by the circumstances of its origin. In their beginnings our boroughs seem to have been mainly gatherings of persons engaged in agricultural pursuits; the first Dooms of London provide especially for the recovery

of cattle belonging to the citizens. But as the increasing security of the country invited the farmer or the landowner to settle apart in his own fields, and the growth of estate and trade told on the towns themselves, the difference between town and country became more sharply defined. London of course took the lead in this new developement of civic life. Even in Æthelstan's day every London merchant who had made three long voyages on his own account ranked as a Thegn. Its "lithsmen," or shipman's-gild, were of sufficient importance under Harthacnut to figure in the election of a king, and its principal street still tells of the rapid growth of trade in its name of 'Cheap-side' or the bargaining place. But at the Norman Conquest the commercial tendency had become universal. The name given to the united brotherhood in a borough is in almost every case no longer that of the 'town-gild,' but of the 'merchant-gild.'

Emancipation of Towns.

This social change in the character of the townsmen produced important results in the character of their municipal institutions. In becoming a merchant-gild the body of citizens who formed the "town" enlarged their powers of civic legislation by applying them to the control of their internal trade. It became their special business to obtain from the crown or from their lords wider commercial privileges, rights of coinage, grants of fairs, and exemption from tolls, while within the town itself they framed regulations as to the sale and quality of goods, the control of markets, and the recovery of debts. It was only by slow and difficult advances that each step in this securing of privilege was won. Still it went steadily on. Whenever we get a glimpse of the inner history of an English town we find the same peaceful revolution in progress, services disappearing through disuse or omission, while privileges and immunities are being purchased in hard cash. The lord of the town, whether he were king, baron, or abbot, was commonly thriftless or poor, and the capture of a noble, or the campaign of a sovereign, or the

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building of some new minster by a prior, brought about an appeal to the thrifty burghers, who were ready to fill again their master's treasury at the price of the strip of parchment which gave them freedom of trade, of justice, and of government. In the silent growth and elevation of the English people the boroughs thus led the way. Unnoticed and despised by prelate and noble they preserved or won back again the full tradition of Teutonic liberty. The right of self-government, the right of free speech in free meeting, the right to equal justice at the hands of one's equals, were brought safely across ages of tyranny by the burghers and shopkeepers of the towns. In the quiet quaintly-named streets, in town-mead and market-place, in the lord's mill beside the stream, in the bell that swung out its summons to the crowded borough-mote, in merchant-gild, and church-gild and craft-gild, lay the life of Englishmen who were doing more than knight and baron to make England what she is, the life of their home and their trade, of their sturdy battle with oppression, their steady, ceaseless struggle for right and freedom.

London.

London stood first among English towns, and the privileges which its citizens won became precedents for the burghers of meaner boroughs. Even at the Conquest its power and wealth secured it a full recognition of all its ancient privileges from the Conqueror. In one way indeed it profited by the revolution which laid England at the feet of the stranger. One immediate result of William's success was an immigration into England from the Continent. A peaceful invasion of the Norman traders followed quick on the invasion of the Norman soldiery. Every Norman noble as he quartered himself upon English lands, every Norman abbot as he entered his English cloister, gathered French artists, French shopkeepers, French domestics about him. Round the Abbey of Battle which William founded on the site of his great victory "Gilbert the Foreigner, Gilbert the Weaver, Benet the Steward, Hugh the Secretary, Baldwin the Tailor," dwelt mixed with the

English tenantry. But nowhere did these immigrants play so notable a part as in London. The Normans had had mercantile establishments in London as early as the reign of Æthelred, if not of Eadgar. Such settlements however naturally formed nothing more than a trading colony like the colony of the "Emperor's Men," or Easterlings. But with the Conquest their number greatly increased. "Many of the citizens of Rouen and Caen passed over thither, preferring to be dwellers in this city, inasmuch as it was fitter for their trading and better stored with the merchandize in which they were wont to traffic." The status of these traders indeed had wholly changed. They could no longer be looked upon as strangers in cities which had passed under the Norman rule. In some cases, as at Norwich, the French colony isolated itself in a separate French town, side by side with the English borough. But in London it seems to have taken at once the position of a governing class. Gilbert Beket, the father of the famous Archbishop, was believed in later days to have been one of the portreeves of London, the predecessors of its mayors; he held in Stephen's time a large property in houses within the walls, and a proof of his civic importance was preserved in the annual visit of each newly-elected chief magistrate to his tomb in a little chapel which he had founded in the churchyard of St. Paul's. Yet Gilbert was one of the Norman strangers who followed in the wake of the Conqueror; he was by birth a burgher of Rouen, as his wife was of a burgher family from Caen.

Freedom of London.

It was partly to this infusion of foreign blood, partly no doubt to the long internal peace and order secured by the Norman rule, that London owed the wealth and importance to which it attained during the reign of Henry the First. The charter which Henry granted it became a model for lesser boroughs. The King yielded its citizens the right of justice; each townsman could claim to be tried by his fellow-townsmen in the town-court or hustings whose sessions took place every week. They

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were subject only to the old English trial by oath, and exempt from the trial by battle which the Normans introduced. Their trade was protected from toll or exaction over the length and breadth of the land. The King however still nominated in London as elsewhere the portreeve, or magistrate of the town, nor were the citizens as yet united together in a commune or corporation. But an imperfect civic organization existed in the "wards" or quarters of the town, each governed by its own alderman, and in the "gilds" or voluntary associations of merchants or traders which ensured order and mutual protection for their members. Loose too as these bonds may seem, they were drawn firmly together by the older English traditions of freedom which the towns preserved. The London burgesses gathered in their town-mote when the bell swung out from the bell-tower of St. Paul's to deliberate freely on their own affairs under the presidency of their alderman. Here too they mustered in arms if danger threatened the city, and delivered the town-banner to their captain, the Norman baron Fitz-Walter, to lead them against the enemy.

Early Oxford.

Few boroughs had as yet attained to such power as this, but the instance of Oxford shows how the freedom of London told on the general advance of English towns. In spite of antiquarian fancies it is certain that no town had arisen on the site of Oxford for centuries after the withdrawal of the Roman legions from the isle of Britain. Though the monastery of St. Frideswide rose in the turmoil of the eighth century on the slope which led down to a ford across the Thames, it is long before we get a glimpse of the borough that must have grown up under its walls. The first definite evidence for its existence lies in a brief entry of the English Chronicle which recalls its seizure by Eadward the Elder, but the form of this entry shows that the town was already a considerable one, and in the last wrestle of England with the Dane its position on the borders of Mercia and Wessex combined with its com-

mand of the upper valley of the Thames to give it military and political importance. Of the life of its burgesses however we still know little or nothing. The names of its parishes, St. Aldate, St. Ebbe, St. Mildred, St. Edmund, show how early church after church gathered round the earlier town-church of St. Martin. But the men of the little town remain dim to us. Their town-mote, or the "Portmannimote" as it was called, which was held in the churchyard of St. Martin, still lives in a shadow of its older self as the Freeman's Common Hall—their town-mead is still the Port-meadow. But it is only by later charters or the record of Doomsday that we see them going on pilgrimage to the shrines of Winchester, or chaffering in their market-place, or judging and law-making in their hustings, their merchant-gild regulating trade, their reeve gathering his king's dues of tax or money or marshalling his troop of burghers for the king's wars, their boats paying toll of a hundred herrings in Lent-tide to the Abbot of Abingdon, as they floated down the Thames towards London.

Oxford and the Normans.

The number of houses marked waste in the survey marks the terrible suffering of Oxford in the Norman Conquest: but the ruin was soon repaired, and the erection of its castle, the rebuilding of its churches, the planting of a Jewry in the heart of the town, showed in what various ways the energy of its new masters was giving an impulse to its life. It is a proof of the superiority of the Hebrew dwellings to the Christian houses about them that each of the later town-halls of the borough had, before their expulsion, been houses of Jews. Nearly all the larger dwelling houses in fact which were subsequently converted into academic halls bore traces of the same origin in names such as Moysey's Hall, Lombard's Hall, or Jacob's Hall. The Jewish houses were abundant, for besides the greater Jewry in the heart of it, there was a lesser Jewry scattered over its southern quarter, and we can hardly doubt that this abundance of substantial

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buildings in the town was at least one of the causes which drew teachers and scholars within its walls. The Jewry, a town within a town, lay here as elsewhere isolated and exempt from the common justice, the common life and self-government of the borough. On all but its eastern side too the town was hemmed in by jurisdictions independent of its own. The precincts of the Abbey of Osney, the wide "bailey" of the Castle, bounded it narrowly on the west. To the north, stretching away beyond the little church of St. Giles, lay the fields of the royal manor of Beaumont. The Abbot of Abingdon, whose woods of Cumnor and Bagley closed the southern horizon, held his leet-court in the hamlet of Grampound beyond the bridge. Nor was the whole space within the walls subject to the self-government of the citizens. The Jewry had a rule and law of its own. Scores of householders, dotted over street and lane, were tenants of castle or abbey and paid no suit or service at the borough court.

Oxford and London.

But within these narrow bounds and amidst these various obstacles the spirit of municipal liberty lived a life the more intense that it was so closely cabined and confined. Nowhere indeed was the impulse which London was giving likely to tell with greater force. The "bargemen" of Oxford were connected even before the Conquest with the "boatmen," or shippers, of the capital. In both cases it is probable that the bodies bearing these names represented what is known as the merchant-gild of the town. Royal recognition enables us to trace the merchant-gild of Oxford from the time of Henry the First. Even then lands, islands, pastures belonged to it, and amongst them the same Port-meadow which is familiar to Oxford men pulling lazily on a summer's noon to Godstow. The connexion between the two gilds was primarily one of trade. "In the time of King Eadward and Abbot Ordric" the channel of the Thames beneath the walls of the Abbey of Abingdon became so blocked up that boats could scarce pass as far as Oxford, and it was at the joint prayer of the

burgesses of London and Oxford that the abbot dug a new channel through the meadow to the south of his church. But by the time of Henry the Second closer bonds than this linked the two cities together. In case of any doubt or contest about judgements in their own court the burgesses of Oxford were empowered to refer the matter to the decision of London, "and whatsoever the citizens of London shall adjudge in such cases shall be deemed right." The judicial usages, the municipal rights of each city were assimilated by Henry's charter. "Of whatsoever matter the men of Oxford be put in plea, they shall deraign themselves according to the law and custom of the city of London and not otherwise, because they and the citizens of London are of one and the same custom, law, and liberty."

Life of the Town.

A legal connexion such as this could hardly fail to bring with it an identity of municipal rights. Oxford had already passed through the earlier steps of her advance towards municipal freedom before the conquest of the Norman. Her burghers assembled in their own Portmannimote, and their dues to the crown were assessed at a fixed sum of honey or coin. But the formal definition of their rights dates, as in the case of London, from the time of Henry the First. The customs and exemptions of its townsmen were confirmed by Henry the Second "as ever they enjoyed them in the time of Henry my grandfather, and in like manner as my citizens of London hold them." By this date the town had attained entire judicial and commercial freedom, and liberty of external commerce was secured by the exemption of its citizens from toll on the king's lands. Complete independence was reached when a charter of John substituted a mayor of the town's own choosing for the reeve or bailiff of the crown. But dry details such as these tell little of the quick pulse of popular life that beat in the thirteenth century through such a community as that of Oxford. The church of St. Martin in the very heart of it, at the "Quatrevoix" or Carfax

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where its four streets met, was the centre of the city life. The town-mote was held in its churchyard. Justice was administered ere yet a townhall housed the infant magistracy by mayor or bailiff sitting beneath a low pent-house, the "penniless bench" of later days, outside its eastern wall. Its bell summoned the burghers to council or arms. Around the church the trade-gilds were ranged as in some vast encampment. To the south of it lay Spicery and Vintnery, the quarter of the richer burgesses. Fish-street fell noisily down to the bridge and the ford. The Corn-market occupied then as now the street which led to Northgate. The stalls of the butchers stretched along the "Butcher-row," which formed the road to the bailey and the castle. Close beneath the church lay a nest of huddled lanes, broken by a stately synagogue, and traversed from time to time by the yellow gaberdine of the Jew. Soldiers from the castle rode clashing through the narrow streets; the bells of Osney clanged from the swampy meadows; processions of pilgrims wound through gates and lane to the shrine of St. Frideswide. Frays were common enough; now the sack of a Jew's house; now burgher drawing knife on burgher; now an outbreak of the young student lads who were growing every day in numbers and audacity. But as yet the town was well in hand. The clang of the city bell called every citizen to his door; the call of the mayor brought trade after trade with bow in hand and banners flying to enforce the king's peace.

St. Edmunds-bury.

The advance of towns which had grown up not on the royal domain but around abbey or castle was slower and more difficult. The story of St. Edmundsbury shows how gradual was the transition from pure serfage to an imperfect freedom. Much that had been plough-land here in the Confessor's time was covered with houses by the time of Henry the Second. The building of the great abbey-church drew its craftsmen and masons to mingle with the ploughmen and reapers of the Abbot's domain. The troubles of the time helped here as elsewhere the

progress of the town; serfs, fugitives from justice or their lord, the trader, the Jew, naturally sought shelter under the strong hand of St. Edmund. But the settlers were wholly at the Abbot's mercy. Not a settler but was bound to pay his pence to the Abbot's treasury, to plough a rood of his land, to reap in his harvest-field, to fold his sheep in the Abbey folds, to help bring the annual catch of eels from the Abbey waters. Within the four crosses that bounded the Abbot's domain land and water were his; the cattle of the townsmen paid for their pasture on the common; if the fullers refused the loan of their cloth the cellarer would refuse the use of the stream and seize their looms wherever he found them. No toll might be levied from tenants of the Abbey farms, and customers had to wait before shop and stall till the buyers of the Abbot had had the pick of the market. There was little chance of redress, for if burghers complained in folkmote it was before the Abbot's officers that its meeting was held; if they appealed to the alderman he was the Abbot's nominee and received the horn, the symbol of his office, at the Abbot's hands. Like all the greater revolutions of society, the advance from this mere serfage was a silent one; indeed its more galling instances of oppression seem to have slipped unconsciously away. Some, like the eel-fishing, were commuted for an easy rent; others, like the slavery of the fullers and the toll of flax, simply disappeared. By usage, by omission, by downright forgetfulness, here by a little struggle, there by a present to a needy abbot, the town won freedom.

The Towns and Justice.

But progress was not always unconscious, and one incident in the history of St. Edmundsbury is remarkable, not merely as indicating the advance of law, but yet more as marking the part which a new moral sense of man's right to equal justice was to play in the general advance of the realm. Rude as the borough was, it possessed the right of meeting in full assembly of the townsmen for government and law. Justice was administered in presence of the

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burgesses, and the accused acquitted or condemned by the oath of his neighbours. Without the borough bounds however the system of Norman judicature prevailed; and the rural tenants who did suit and service at the Cellerar's court were subjected to the trial by battle. The execution of a farmer named Kebel who came under this feudal jurisdiction brought the two systems into vivid contrast. Kebel seems to have been guiltless of the crime laid to his charge; but the duel went against him and he was hung just without the gates. The taunts of the townsmen woke his fellow farmers to a sense of wrong. "Had Kebel been a dweller within the borough," said the burgesses, "he would have got his acquittal from the oaths of his neighbours, as our liberty is;" and even the monks were moved to a decision that their tenants should enjoy equal freedom and justice with the townsmen. The franchise of of the town was extended to the rural possessions of the Abbey without it; the farmers "came to the toll-house, were written in the alderman's toll, and paid the town-penny." A chance story preserved in a charter of later date shows the same struggle for justice going on in a greater town. At Leicester the trial by com-purgation, the rough predecessor of trial by jury, had been abolished by the Earls in favour of trial by battle. The aim of the burgesses was to regain their old justice, and in this a touching incident at last made them successful. "It chanced that two kinsmen, Nicholas the son of Acon and Geoffrey the son of Nicholas, waged a duel about a certain piece of land concerning which a dispute had arisen between them; and they fought from the first to the ninth hour, each conquering by turns. Then one of them fleeing from the other till he came to a certain little pit, as he stood on the brink of the pit and was about to fall therein, his kinsman said to him 'Take care of the pit, turn back, lest thou shouldest fall into it.' Thereat so much clamour and noise was made by the bystanders and those who were sitting around that the

Earl heard these clamours as far off as the castle, and he enquired of some how it was there was such a clamour, and answer was made to him that two kinsmen were fighting about a certain piece of ground, and that one had fled till he reached a certain little pit, and that as he stood over the pit and was about to fall into it the other warned him. Then the townsmen being moved with pity, made a covenant with the Earl that they should give him threepence yearly for each house in the High Street that had a gable, on condition that he should grant to them that the twenty-four jurors who were in Leicester from ancient times should from that time forward discuss and decide all pleas they might have among themselves."

Division of labour.

At the time we have reached this struggle for emancipation was nearly over. The larger towns had secured the privilege of self-government, the administration of justice, and the control of their own trade. The reigns of Richard and John mark the date in our municipal history at which towns began to acquire the right of electing their own chief magistrate, the Portreeve or Mayor, who had till then been a nominee of the crown. But with the close of this outer struggle opened an inner struggle between the various classes of the townsmen themselves. The growth of wealth and industry was bringing with it a vast increase of population. The mass of the new settlers, composed as they were of escaped serfs, of traders without landed holdings, of families who had lost their original lot in the borough, and generally of the artizans and the poor, had no part in the actual life of the town. The right of trade and of the regulation of trade in common with all other forms of jurisdiction lay wholly in the hands of the landed burghers whom we have described. By a natural process too their superiority in wealth produced a fresh division between the "burghers" of the merchant-gild and the unenfranchised mass around them. The same change which severed at Florence the seven Greater Arts or trades from the fourteen Lesser Arts, and which raised the three

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occupations of banking, the manufacture and the dyeing of cloth, to a position of superiority even within the privileged circle of the seven, told though with less force on the English boroughs. The burghers of the merchant-gild gradually concentrated themselves on the greater operations of commerce, on trades which required a larger capital, while the meaner employments of general traffic were abandoned to their poorer neighbours. This advance in the division of labour is marked by such severances as we note in the thirteenth century of the cloth merchant from the tailor or the leather merchant from the butcher.

Trade Gilds.

But the result of this severance was all-important in its influence on the constitution of our towns. The members of the trades thus abandoned by the wealthier burghers formed themselves into Craft-gilds which soon rose into dangerous rivalry with the original Merchant-gild of the town. A seven years' apprenticeship formed the necessary prelude to full membership of these trade-gilds. Their regulations were of the minutest character; the quality and value of work were rigidly prescribed, the hours of toil fixed "from day-break to curfew," and strict provision made against competition in labour. At each meeting of these gilds their members gathered round the Craft-box which contained the rules of their Society, and stood with bared heads as it was opened. The warden and a quorum of gild-brothers formed a court which enforced the ordinances of the gild, inspected all work done by its members, confiscated unlawful tools or unworthy goods; and disobedience to their orders was punished by fines or in the last resort by expulsion, which involved the loss of a right to trade. A common fund was raised by contributions among the members, which not only provided for the trade objects of the gild but sufficed to found chantries and masses and set up painted windows in the church of their patron saint. Even at the present day the arms of a craft-gild may often be seen blazoned in cathedrals side by side with those of prelates and of kings. But it was only by slow degrees that

they rose to such a height as this. The first steps in their existence were the most difficult, for to enable a trade-gild to carry out its objects with any success it was first necessary that the whole body of craftsmen belonging to the trade should be compelled to join the gild, and secondly that a legal control over the trade itself should be secured to it. A royal charter was indispensable for these purposes, and over the grant of these charters took place the first struggle with the merchant-gilds which had till then solely exercized jurisdiction over trade within the boroughs. The weavers, who were the first trade-gild to secure royal sanction in the reign of Henry the First, were still engaged in a contest for existence as late as the reign of John when the citizens of London bought for a time the suppression of their gild. Even under the House of Lancaster Exeter was engaged in resisting the establishment of a tailor's gild. From the eleventh century however the spread of these societies went steadily on, and the control of trade passed more and more from the merchant-gilds to the craft-gilds.

Greater and Lesser Folk.

It is this struggle, to use the technical terms of the time, of the "greater folk" against the "lesser folk," or of the "commune," the general mass of the inhabitants, against the "prudhommes," or "wiser" few, which brought about, as it passed from the regulation of trade to the general government of the town, the great civic revolution of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. On the Continent, and especially along the Rhine, the struggle was as fierce as the supremacy of the older burghers had been complete. In Köln the craftsmen had been reduced to all but serfage, and the merchant of Brussels might box at his will the ears of "the man without heart or honour who lives by his toil." Such social tyranny of class over class brought a century of bloodshed to the cities of Germany; but in England the tyranny of class over class was restrained by the general tenor of the law, and the revolution took for the most part a milder form. The longest and bitterest strife of all was naturally at London. Nowhere had the territorial

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constitution struck root so deeply, and nowhere had the landed oligarchy risen to such a height of wealth and influence. The city was divided into wards, each of which was governed by an alderman drawn from the ruling class. In some indeed the office seems to have become hereditary. The "magnates," or "barons," of the merchant-gild advised alone on all matters of civic government or trade regulation, and distributed or assessed at their will the revenues or burthens of the town. Such a position afforded an opening for corruption and oppression of the most galling kind; and it seems to have been a general impression of the unfair assessment of the dues levied on the poor and the undue burthens which were thrown on the unenfranchised classes which provoked the first serious discontent. In the reign of Richard the First William of the Long Beard, though one of the governing body, placed himself at the head of a conspiracy which in the panic-stricken fancy of the burghers numbered fifty thousand of the craftsmen. His eloquence, his bold defiance of the aldermen in the town-mote, gained him at any rate a wide popularity, and the crowds who surrounded him hailed him as "the saviour of the poor." One of his addresses is luckily preserved to us by a hearer of the time. In mediæval fashion he began with a text from the Vulgate, "Ye shall draw water with joy from the fountain of the Saviour." "I," he began, "am the saviour of the poor. Ye poor men who have felt the weight of rich men's hands, draw from my fountain waters of wholesome instruction and that with joy, for the time of your visitation is at hand. For I will divide the waters from the waters. It is the people who are the waters, and I will divide the lowly and faithful folk from the proud and faithless folk; I will part the chosen from the reprobate as light from darkness." But it was in vain that he strove to win royal favour for the popular cause. The support of the moneyed classes was essential to Richard in the costly wars with Philip of France; and the Justiciar, Archbishop Hubert, after a moment of hesitation issued orders for William

Longbeard's arrest. William felled with an axe the first soldier who advanced to seize him, and taking refuge with a few adherents in the tower of St. Mary-le-Bow summoned his adherents to rise. Hubert however, who had already flooded the city with troops, with bold contempt of the right of sanctuary set fire to the tower. William was forced to surrender, and a burgher's son, whose father he had slain, stabbed him as he came forth. With his death the quarrel slumbered for more than fifty years. But the movement towards equality went steadily on. Under pretext of preserving the peace the unenfranchised townsmen united in secret frith-gilds of their own, and mobs rose from time to time to sack the houses of foreigners and the wealthier burgesses. Nor did London stand alone in this movement. In all the larger towns the same discontent prevailed, the same social growth called for new institutions, and in their silent revolt against the oppression of the Merchant-gild the Craft-gilds were training themselves to stand forward as champions of a wider liberty in the Barons' War.

The Villein.

Without the towns progress was far slower and more fitful. It would seem indeed that the conquest of the Norman bore harder on the rural population than on any other class of Englishmen. Under the later kings of the house of Ælfred the number of absolute slaves and the number of freemen had alike diminished. The pure slave class had never been numerous, and it had been reduced by the efforts of the Church, perhaps by the general convulsion of the Danish wars. But these wars had often driven the ceorl or freeman of the township to "commend" himself to a thegn who pledged him his protection in consideration of payment in a rendering of labour. It is probable that these dependent ceorls are the 'villeins' of the Norman epoch, the most numerous class of the Domesday Survey, men sunk indeed from pure freedom and bound both to soil and lord, but as yet preserving much of their older rights, retaining their land, free as against all men but

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their lord, and still sending representatives to hundred-moot and shire-moot. They stood therefore far above the "landless man," the man who had never possessed even under the old constitution political rights, whom the legislation of the English Kings had forced to attach himself to a lord on pain of outlawry, and who served as household servant or as hired labourer or at the best as rent-paying tenant of land which was not his own. The Norman knight or lawyer however saw little distinction between these classes; and the tendency of legislation under the Angevins was to blend all in a single class of serfs. While the pure 'theow' or absolute slave disappeared therefore the ceorl or villein sank lower in the social scale. But though the rural population was undoubtedly thrown more together and fused into a more homogeneous class, its actual position corresponded very imperfectly with the view of the lawyers. All indeed were dependents on a lord. The manor-house became the centre of every English village. The manor-court was held in its hall; it was here that the lord or his steward received homage, recovered fines, held the view of frank-pledge, or enrolled the villagers in their tithing. Here too, if the lord possessed criminal jurisdiction, was held his justice court, and without its doors stood his gallows. Around it lay the lord's demesne or home-farm, and the cultivation of this rested wholly with the "villeins" of the manor. It was by them that the great barn was filled with sheaves, the sheep shorn, the grain malted, the wood hewn for the manor-hall fire. These services were the labour-rent by which they held their lands, and it was the nature and extent of this labour-rent which parted one class of the population from another. The 'villein,' in the strict sense of the word, was bound only to gather in his lord's harvest and to aid in the ploughing and sowing of autumn and Lent. The cottar, the bordar, and the labourer were bound to help in the work of the home-farm throughout the year.

But these services and the time of rendering them were

strictly limited by custom, not only in the case of the ceorl or villein but in that of the originally meaner "landless man." The possession of his little homestead with the ground around it, the privilege of turning out his cattle on the waste of the manor, passed quietly and insensibly from mere indulgences that could be granted or withdrawn at a lord's caprice into rights that could be pleaded at law. The number of teams, the fines, the reliefs, the services that a lord could claim, at first mere matter of oral tradition, came to be entered on the court-roll of the manor, a copy of which became the title-deed of the villein. It was to this that he owed the name of "copy-holder" which at a later time superseded his older title. Disputes were settled by a reference to this roll or on oral evidence of the custom at issue, but a social arrangement which was eminently characteristic of the English spirit of compromise generally secured a fair adjustment of the claims of villein and lord. It was the duty of the lord's bailiff to exact their due services from the villeins, but his coadjutor in this office, the reeve or foreman of the manor, was chosen by the tenants themselves and acted as representative of their interests and rights. A fresh step towards freedom was made by the growing tendency to commute labour-services for money-payments. The population was slowly increasing, and as the law of gavel-kind which was applicable to all landed estates not held by military tenure divided the inheritance of the tenantry equally among their sons the holding of each tenant and the services due from it became divided in a corresponding degree. A labour-rent thus became more difficult to enforce, while the increase of wealth among the tenantry and the rise of a new spirit of independence made it more burthensome to those who rendered it. It was probably from this cause that the commutation of the arrears of labour for a money payment, which had long prevailed on every estate, gradually developed into a general commutation of services. We have already witnessed the silent progress of this

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remarkable change in the case of St. Edmundsbury, but the practice soon became universal, and "malt-silver," "wood-silver," and "larder-silver" gradually took the place of the older personal services on the court-rolls. The process of commutation was hastened by the necessities of the lords themselves. The luxury of the castle-hall, the splendour and pomp of chivalry, the cost of campaigns drained the purses of knight and baron, and the sale of freedom to a serf or exemption from services to a villein afforded an easy and tempting mode of refilling them. In this process even Kings took part. At a later time, under Edward the Third, commissioners were sent to royal estates for the especial purpose of selling manumissions to the King's serfs; and we still possess the names of those who were enfranchised with their families by a payment of hard cash in aid of the exhausted exchequer.

England.

Such was the people which had been growing into a national unity and a national vigour while English king and English baronage battled for rule. But king and baronage themselves had changed like townsman and ceorl. The loss of Normandy, entailing as it did the loss of their Norman lands, was the last of many influences which had been giving through a century and a half a national temper to the baronage. Not only the "new men," the ministers out of whom the two Henrys had raised a nobility, were bound to the Crown, but the older feudal houses now owned themselves as Englishmen and set aside their aims after personal independence for a love of the general freedom of the land. They stood out as the natural leaders of a people bound together by the stern government which had crushed all local division, which had accustomed men to the enjoyment of a peace and justice that imperfect as it seems to modern eyes was almost unexampled elsewhere in Europe, and which had trained them to something of their old free government again by the very machinery of election it used to facilitate its heavy taxation. On the other hand the loss of

Normandy brought home the King. The growth which had been going on had easily escaped the eyes of rulers who were commonly absent from the realm and busy with the affairs of countries beyond the sea. Henry the Second had been absent for years from England: Richard had only visited it twice for a few months: John had as yet been almost wholly occupied with his foreign dominions. To him as to his brother England had as yet been nothing but a land whose gold paid the mercenaries that followed him, and whose people bowed obediently to his will. It was easy to see that between such a ruler and such a nation once brought together strife must come: but that the strife came as it did and ended as it did was due above all to the character of the King.

John.

"Foul as it is, hell itself is defiled by the fouler presence of John." The terrible verdict of his contemporaries has passed into the sober judgement of history. Externally John possessed all the quickness, the vivacity, the cleverness, the good-humour, the social charm which distinguished his house. His worst enemies owned that he toiled steadily and closely at the work of administration. He was fond of learned men like Gerald of Wales. He had a strange gift of attracting friends and of winning the love of women. But in his inner soul John was the worst outcome of the Angevins. He united into one mass of wickedness their insolence, their selfishness, their unbridled lust, their cruelty and tyranny, their shamelessness, their superstition, their cynical indifference to honour or truth. In mere boyhood he tore with brutal levity the beards of the Irish chieftains who came to own him as their lord. His ingratitude and perfidy brought his father with sorrow to the grave. To his brother he was the worst of traitors. All Christendom believed him to be the murderer of his nephew, Arthur of Britanny. He abandoned one wife and was faithless to another. His punishments were refinements of cruelty, the starvation of children, the

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crushing old men under copes of lead. His court was a brothel where no woman was safe from the royal lust, and where his cynicism loved to publish the news of his victims' shame. He was as craven in his superstition as he was daring in his impiety. Though he scoffed at priests and turned his back on the mass even amidst the solemnities of his coronation he never stirred on a journey without hanging relics round his neck. But with the wickedness of his race he inherited its profound ability. His plan for the relief of Château Gaillard, the rapid march by which he shattered Arthur's hopes at Mirabel, showed an inborn genius for war. In the rapidity and breadth of his political combinations he far surpassed the statesmen of his time. Throughout his reign we see him quick to discern the difficulties of his position, and inexhaustible in the resources with which he met them. The overthrow of his continental power only spurred him to the formation of a league which all but brought Philip to the ground; and the sudden revolt of England was parried by a shameless alliance with the Papacy. The closer study of John's history clears away the charges of sloth and incapacity with which men tried to explain the greatness of his fall. The awful lesson of his life rests on the fact that the king who lost Normandy, became the vassal of the Pope, and perished in a struggle of despair against English freedom was no weak and indolent voluptuary but the ablest and most ruthless of the Angevins.

Innocent the Third.

From the moment of his return to England in 1204 John's whole energies were bent to the recovery of his dominions on the Continent. He impatiently collected money and men for the support of those adherents of the House of Anjou who were still struggling against the arms of France in Poitou and Guienne, and in the summer of 1205 he gathered an army at Portsmouth and prepared to cross the Channel. But his project was suddenly thwarted by the resolute opposition of the Primate, Hubert Walter,

and the Earl of Pembroke, William Marshal. So completely had both the baronage and the Church been humbled by his father that the attitude of their representatives revealed to the King a new spirit of national freedom which was rising around him, and John at once braced himself to a struggle with it. The death of Hubert Walter in July, only a few days after his protest, removed his most formidable opponent, and the King resolved to neutralize the opposition of the Church by placing a creature of his own at its head. John de Grey, Bishop of Norwich, was elected by the monks of Canterbury at his bidding, and enthroned as Primate. But in a previous though informal gathering the convent had already chosen its sub-prior, Reginald, as Archbishop. The rival claimants hastened to appeal to Rome, and their appeal reached the Papal Court before Christmas. The result of the contest was a startling one both for themselves and for the King. After a year's careful examination Innocent the Third, who now occupied the Papal throne, quashed at the close of 1206 both the contested elections. The decision was probably a just one, but Innocent was far from stopping there. The monks who appeared before him brought powers from the convent to choose a new Primate should their earlier nomination be set aside; and John, secretly assured of their choice of Grey, had promised to confirm their election. But the bribes which the King lavished at Rome failed to win the Pope over to this plan; and whether from mere love of power, for he was pushing the Papal claims of supremacy over Christendom further than any of his predecessors, or as may fairly be supposed in despair of a free election within English bounds, Innocent commanded the monks to elect in his presence Stephen Langton to the archiepiscopal see.

The Interdict.

Personally a better choice could not have been made, for Stephen was a man who by sheer weight of learning and holiness of life had risen to the dignity of

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Cardinal and whose after career placed him in the front rank of English patriots. But in itself the step was an usurpation of the rights both of the Church and of the Crown. The King at once met it with resistance. When Innocent consecrated the new Primate in June, 1207, and threatened the realm with interdict if Langton were any longer excluded from his see, John replied by a counter threat that the interdict should be followed by the banishment of the clergy and the mutilation of every Italian he could seize in the realm. How little he feared the priesthood he showed when the clergy refused his demand of a thirteenth of movables for the whole country and Archbishop Geoffry of York resisted the tax before the Council. John banished the Archbishop and extorted the money. Innocent however was not a man to draw back from his purpose, and in March 1208 the interdict he had threatened fell upon the land. All worship save that of a few privileged orders, all administration of Sacraments save that of private baptism, ceased over the length and breadth of the country: the church-bells were silent, the dead lay unburied on the ground. Many of the bishops fled from the country. The Church in fact, so long the main support of the royal power against the baronage, was now driven into opposition. Its change of attitude was to be of vast moment in the struggle which was impending; but John recked little of the future; he replied to the interdict by confiscating the lands of the clergy who observed it, by subjecting them in spite of their privileges to the royal courts, and by leaving outrages on them unpunished. "Let him go," said John, when a Welshman was brought before him for the murder of a priest, "he has killed my enemy." In 1209 the Pope proceeded to the further sentence of excommunication, and the King was formally cut off from the pale of the Church. But the new sentence was met with the same defiance as the old. Five of the bishops fled over sea, and secret disaffection was spreading widely, but there was no public avoidance of

the excommunicated King. An Archdeacon of Norwich who withdrew from his service was crushed to death under a cope of lead, and the hint was sufficient to prevent either prelate or noble from following his example.

The Deposition.

The attitude of John showed the power which the administrative reforms of his father had given to the Crown. He stood alone, with nobles estranged from him and the Church against him, but his strength seemed utterly unbroken. From the first moment of his rule John had defied the baronage. The promise to satisfy their demand for redress of wrongs in the past reign, a promise made at his election, remained unfulfilled; when the demand was repeated he answered it by seizing their castles and taking their children as hostages for their loyalty. The cost of his fruitless threats of war had been met by heavy and repeated taxation, by increased land tax and increased scutage. The quarrel with the Church and fear of their revolt only deepened his oppression of the nobles. He drove De Braose, one of the most powerful of the Lords Marchers, to die in exile, while his wife and grandchildren were believed to have been starved to death in the royal prisons. On the nobles who still clung panic-stricken to the court of the excommunicate king John heaped outrages worse than death. Illegal exactions, the seizure of their castles, the preference shown to foreigners, were small provocations compared with his attacks on the honour of their wives and daughters. But the baronage still submitted. The financial exactions indeed became light as John filled his treasury with the goods of the Church; the King's vigour was seen in the rapidity with which he crushed a rising of the nobles in Ireland and foiled an outbreak of the Welsh; while the triumphs of his father had taught the baronage its weakness in any single-handed struggle against the Crown. Hated therefore as he was the land remained still. Only one weapon was now left in Innocent's hands. Men held then that a King, once excommunicate, ceased to be a Christian

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or to have claims on the obedience of Christian subjects. As spiritual heads of Christendom, the Popes had ere now asserted their right to remove such a ruler from his throne and to give it to a worthier than he; and it was this right which Innocent at last felt himself driven to exercize. After useless threats he issued in 1212 a bull of deposition against John, absolved his subjects from their allegiance, proclaimed a crusade against him as an enemy to Christianity and the Church, and committed the execution of the sentence to the King of the French. John met the announcement of this step with the same scorn as before. His insolent disdain suffered the Roman legate, Cardinal Pandulf, to proclaim his deposition to his face at Northampton. When Philip collected an army for an attack on England an enormous host gathered at the King's call on Barham Down; and the English fleet dispelled all danger of invasion by crossing the Channel, by capturing a number of French ships, and by burning Dieppe.

John's Submission.

But it was not in England only that the King showed his strength and activity. Vile as he was, John possessed in a high degree the political ability of his race, and in the diplomatic efforts with which he met the danger from France he showed himself his father's equal. The barons of Poitou were roused to attack Philip from the south. John bought the aid of the Count of Flanders on his northern border. The German King, Otto, pledged himself to bring the knighthood of Germany to support an invasion of France. But at the moment of his success in diplomacy John suddenly gave way. It was in fact the revelation of a danger at home which shook him from his attitude of contemptuous defiance. The bull of deposition gave fresh energy to every enemy. The Scotch King was in correspondence with Innocent. The Welsh princes who had just been forced to submission broke out again in war. John hanged their hostages, and called his host to muster for a fresh inroad into Wales, but the army met only to become a fresh source of danger.

Powerless to oppose the King openly, the baronage had plunged almost to a man into secret conspiracies. The hostility of Philip had dispelled their dread of isolated action; many indeed had even promised aid to the French King on his landing. John found himself in the midst of hidden enemies; and nothing could have saved him but the haste—whether of panic or quick decision—with which he disbanded his army and took refuge in Nottingham Castle. The arrest of some of the barons showed how true were his fears, for the heads of the French conspiracy, Robert Fitzwalter and Eustace de Vesci, at once fled over sea to Philip. His daring self-confidence, the skill of his diplomacy, could no longer hide from John the utter loneliness of his position. At war with Rome, with France, with Scotland, Ireland and Wales, at war with the Church, he saw himself disarmed by this sudden revelation of treason in the one force left at his disposal. With characteristic suddenness he gave way. He endeavoured by remission of fines to win back his people. He negotiated eagerly with the Pope, consented to receive the Archbishop, and promised to repay the money he had extorted from the Church.

John becomes vassal of Rome.

But the shameless ingenuity of the King's temper was seen in his resolve to find in his very humiliation a new source of strength. If he yielded to the Church he had no mind to yield to the rest of his foes; it was indeed in the Pope who had defeated him that he saw the means of baffling their efforts. It was Rome that formed the link between the varied elements of hostility which combined against him. It was Rome that gave its sanction to Philip's ambition and roused the hopes of Scotch and Welsh, Rome that called the clergy to independence and nerved the barons to resistance. To detach Innocent by submission from the league which hemmed him in on every side was the least part of John's purpose. He resolved to make Rome his ally, to turn its spiritual thunders on his foes, to use it in breaking up the confederacy it

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had formed, in crushing the baronage, in oppressing the clergy, in paralyzing—as Rome only could paralyze—the energy of the Primate. That greater issues even than these were involved in John's rapid change of policy time was to show; but there is no need to credit the King with the foresight that would have discerned them. His quick versatile temper saw no doubt little save the momentary gain. But that gain was immense. Nor was the price as hard to pay as it seems to modern eyes. The Pope stood too high above earthly monarchs, his claims, at least as Innocent conceived and expressed them, were too spiritual, too remote from the immediate business and interests of the day, to make the owning of his suzerainty any very practical burthen. John could recall a time when his father was willing to own the same subjection as that which he was about to take on himself. He could recall the parallel allegiance which his brother had pledged to the Emperor. Shame indeed there must be in any loss of independence, but in this less than any, and with Rome the shame of submission had already been incurred. But whatever were the King's thoughts his act was decisive. On the 15th of May 1213 he knelt before the legate Pandulf, surrendered his kingdom to the Roman See, took it back again as a tributary vassal, swore fealty and did liege homage to the Pope.

Its Results.

In after times men believed that England thrilled at the news with a sense of national shame such as she had never felt before. "He has become the Pope's man" the whole country was said to have murmured; "he has forfeited the very name of King; from a free man he has degraded himself into a serf." But this was the belief of a time still to come when the rapid growth of national feeling which this step and its issues did more than anything to foster made men look back on the scene between John and Pandulf as a national dishonour. We see little trace of such a feeling in the contemporary accounts of the time. All seem rather to have

regarded it as a complete settlement of the difficulties in which king and kingdom were involved. As a political measure its success was immediate and complete. The French army at once broke up in impotent rage, and when Philip turned on the enemy John had raised up for him in Flanders, five hundred English ships under the Earl of Salisbury fell upon the fleet which accompanied the French army along the coast and utterly destroyed it. The league which John had so long matured at once disclosed itself. Otto, reinforcing his German army by the knighthood of Flanders and Boulogne as well as by a body of mercenaries in the pay of the English King, invaded France from the north. John called on his baronage to follow him over sea for an attack on Philip from the South.

Geoffry Fitz-Peter.

Their plea that he remained excommunicate was set aside by the arrival of Langton and his formal absolution of the King on a renewal of his coronation oath and a pledge to put away all evil customs. But the barons still stood aloof. They would serve at home, they said, but they refused to cross the sea. Those of the north took a more decided attitude of opposition. From this point indeed the northern barons begin to play their part in our constitutional history. Lacies, Vescies, Percies, Stutevilles, Bruces, houses such as those of de Ros or de Vaux, all had sprung to greatness on the ruins of the Mowbrays and the great houses of the Conquest and had done service to the Crown in its strife with the older feudatories. But loyal as was their tradition they were English to the core; they had neither lands nor interest over sea, and they now declared themselves bound by no tenure to follow the King in foreign wars. Furious at this check to his plans John marched in arms northwards to bring these barons to submission. But he had now to reckon with a new antagonist in the Justiciar, Geoffry Fitz-Peter. Geoffry had hitherto bent to the King's will; but the political sagacity which he drew from the school of Henry the Second in which he had been trained showed

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him the need of concession, and his wealth, his wide kinship, and his experience of affairs gave his interposition a decisive weight. He seized on the political opportunity which was offered by the gathering of a Council at St. Albans at the opening of August with the purpose of assessing the damages done to the Church. Besides the bishops and barons, a reeve and his four men were summoned to this Council from each royal demesne, no doubt simply as witnesses of the sums due to the plundered clergy. Their presence however was of great import. It is the first instance which our history presents of the summons of such representatives to a national Council, and the instance took fresh weight from the great matters which came to be discussed. In the King's name the Justiciar promised good government for the time to come, and forbade all royal officers to practise extortion as they prized life and limb. The King's peace was pledged to those who had opposed him in the past; and observance of the laws of Henry the First was enjoined upon all within the realm.

Stephen Langton.

But it was not in Geoffry Fitz-Peter that English freedom was to find its champion and the baronage their leader. From the moment of his landing in England Stephen Langton had taken up the constitutional position of the Primate in upholding the old customs and rights of the realm against the personal despotism of the kings. As Anselm had withstood William the Red, as Theobald had withstood Stephen, so Langton prepared to withstand and rescue his country from the tyranny of John. He had already forced him to swear to observe the laws of Edward the Confessor, in other words the traditional liberties of the realm. When the baronage refused to sail for Poitou he compelled the King to deal with them not by arms but by process of law. But the work which he now undertook was far greater and weightier than this. The pledges of Henry the First had long been forgotten when the Justiciar brought them to light, but Langton saw

the vast importance of such a precedent. At the close of the month he produced Henry's charter in a fresh gathering of barons at St. Paul's, and it was at once welcomed as a base for the needed reforms. From London Langton hastened to the King, whom he reached at Northampton on his way to attack the nobles of the north, and wrested from him a promise to bring his strife with them to legal judgement before assailing them in arms. With his allies gathering abroad John had doubtless no wish to be entangled in a long quarrel at home, and the Archbishop's mediation allowed him to withdraw with seeming dignity. After a demonstration therefore at Durham John marched hastily south again, and reached London in October. His Justiciar at once laid before him the claims of the Councils of St. Alban's and St. Paul's; but the death of Geoffry at this juncture freed him from the pressure which his minister was putting upon him. "Now, by God's feet," cried John, "I am for the first time King and Lord of England," and he entrusted the vacant justiciarship to a Poitevin, Peter des Roches, the Bishop of Winchester, whose temper was in harmony with his own. But the death of Geoffry only called the Archbishop to the front, and Langton at once demanded the King's assent to the Charter of Henry the First. In seizing on this Charter as a basis for national action Langton showed a political ability of the highest order. The enthusiasm with which its recital was welcomed showed the sagacity with which the Archbishop had chosen his ground. From that moment the baronage was no longer drawn together in secret conspiracies by a sense of common wrong or a vague longing for common deliverance: they were openly united in a definite claim of national freedom and national law.

Bouvines.

John could as yet only meet the claim by delay. His policy had still to wait for its fruits at Rome, his diplomacy to reap its harvest in Flanders, ere he could deal with England. From the hour of his submission to the Papacy

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his one thought had been that of vengeance on the barons who, as he held, had betrayed him; but vengeance was impossible till he should return a conqueror from the fields of France. It was a sense of this danger which nerved the baronage to their obstinate refusal to follow him over sea: but furious as he was at their resistance, the Archbishop's interposition condemned John still to wait for the hour of his revenge. In the spring of 1214 he crossed with what forces he could gather to Poitou, rallied its nobles round him, passed the Loire in triumph, and won back again Angers, the home of his race. At the same time Otto and the Count of Flanders, their German and Flemish knighthood strengthened by reinforcements from Boulogne as well as by a body of English troops under the Earl of Salisbury, threatened France from the north. For the moment Philip seemed lost: and yet on the fortunes of Philip hung the fortunes of English freedom. But in this crisis of her fate, France was true to herself and her King. From every borough of Northern France the townsmen marched to his rescue, and the village priests led their flocks to battle with the Church-banners flying at their head. The two armies met at the close of July near the bridge of Bouvines, between Lille and Tournay, and from the first the day went against the allies. The Flemish knights were the first to fly; then the Germans in the centre of the host were crushed by the overwhelming numbers of the French; last of all the English on the right of it were broken by a fierce onset of the Bishop of Beauvais who charged mace in hand and struck the Earl of Salisbury to the ground. The news of this complete overthrow reached John in the midst of his triumphs in the South, and scattered his hopes to the winds. He was at once deserted by the Poitevin nobles; and a hasty retreat alone enabled him to return in October, baffled and humiliated, to his island kingdom.

Rising of the Baronage.

His return forced on the crisis to which events had so long been drifting. The victory at Bouvines gave strength

to his opponents. The open resistance of the northern Barons nerved the rest of their order to action. The great houses who had cast away their older feudal traditions for a more national policy were drawn by the crisis into close union with the families which had sprung from the ministers and councillors of the two Henries. To the first group belonged such men as Saher de Quinci, the Earl of Winchester, Geoffrey of Mandeville, Earl of Essex, the Earl of Clare, Fulk Fitz-Warin, William Mallet, the houses of Fitz-Alan and Gant. Among the second group were Henry Bohun and Roger Bigod, the Earls of Hereford and Norfolk, the younger William Marshal, and Robert de Vere. Robert Fitz-Walter, who took the command of their united force, represented both parties equally, for he was sprung from the Norman house of Brionne, while the Justiciar of Henry the Second, Richard de Lucy, had been his grandfather. Secretly, and on the pretext of pilgrimage, these nobles met at St. Edmundsbury, resolute to bear no longer with John's delays. If he refused to restore their liberties they swore to make war on him till he confirmed them by Charter under the King's seal, and they parted to raise forces with the purpose of presenting their demands at Christmas. John, knowing nothing of the coming storm, pursued his policy of winning over the Church by granting it freedom of election, while he embittered still more the strife with his nobles by demanding scutage from the northern nobles who had refused to follow him to Poitou. But the barons were now ready to act, and early in January in the memorable year 1215 they appeared in arms to lay, as they had planned, their demands before the King.

John deserted.

John was taken by surprize. He asked for a truce till Easter-tide, and spent the interval in fevered efforts to avoid the blow. Again he offered freedom to the Church, and took vows as a Crusader against whom war was a sacrilege, while he called for a general oath of allegiance and fealty from the whole body of his subjects.

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But month after month only showed the King the uselessness of further resistance. Though Pandulf was with him, his vassalage had as yet brought little fruit in the way of aid from Rome; the commissioners whom he sent to plead his cause at the shire-courts brought back news that no man would help him against the charter that the barons claimed: and his efforts to detach the clergy from the league of his opponents utterly failed. The nation was against the King. He was far indeed from being utterly deserted. His ministers still clung to him, men such as Geoffrey de Lucy, Geoffrey de Furnival, Thomas Basset, and William Briwere, statesmen trained in the administrative school of his father and who, dissent as they might from John's mere oppression, still looked on the power of the Crown as the one barrier against feudal anarchy: and beside them stood some of the great nobles of royal blood, his father's bastard Earl William of Salisbury, his cousin Earl William of Warenne, and Henry Earl of Cornwall, a grandson of Henry the First. With him too remained Ranulf, Earl of Chester, and the wisest and noblest of the barons, William Marshal the elder, Earl of Pembroke. William Marshal had shared in the rising of the younger Henry against Henry the Second, and stood by him as he died; he had shared in the overthrow of William Longchamp and in the outlawry of John. He was now an old man, firm, as we shall see in his after-course, to recall the government to the path of freedom and law, but shrinking from a strife which might bring back the anarchy of Stephen's day, and looking for reforms rather in the bringing constitutional pressure to bear upon the King than in forcing them from him by arms.

John yields.

But cling as such men might to John, they clung to him rather as mediators than adherents. Their sympathies went with the demands of the barons when the delay which had been granted was over and the nobles again gathered in arms at Brackley in Northamptonshire to lay their claims before the King.

Nothing marks more strongly the absolutely despotic idea of his sovereignty which John had formed than the passionate surprize which breaks out in his reply. "Why do they not ask for my kingdom?" he cried. "I will never grant such liberties as will make me a slave!" The imperialist theories of the lawyers of his father's court had done their work. Held at bay by the practical sense of Henry, they had told on the more headstrong nature of his sons. Richard and John both held with Glanvill that the will of the prince was the law of the land; and to fetter that will by the customs and franchises which were embodied in the barons' claims seemed to John a monstrous usurpation of his rights. But no imperialist theories had touched the minds of his people. The country rose as one man at his refusal. At the close of May London threw open her gates to the forces of the barons, now arrayed under Robert Fitz-Walter as "Marshal of the Army of God and Holy Church." Exeter and Lincoln followed the example of the capital; promises of aid came from Scotland and Wales; the northern barons marched hastily under Eustace de Vesci to join their comrades in London. Even the nobles who had as yet clung to the King, but whose hopes of conciliation were blasted by his obstinacy, yielded at last to the summons of the "Army of God." Pandulf indeed and Archbishop Langton still remained with John, but they counselled as Earl Ranulf and William Marshal counselled his acceptance of the Charter. None in fact counselled its rejection save his new Justiciar, the Poitevin Peter des Roches, and other foreigners who knew the barons purposed driving them from the land. But even the number of these was small; there was a moment when John found himself with but seven knights at his back and before him a nation in arms. Quick as he was, he had been taken utterly by surprize. It was in vain that in the short respite he had gained from Christmas to Easter he had summoned mercenaries to his aid and

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appealed to his new suzerain, the Pope. Summons and appeal were alike too late. Nursing wrath in his heart, John bowed to necessity and called the barons to a conference on an island in the Thames, between Windsor and Staines, near a marshy meadow by the river side, the meadow of Runnymede. The King encamped on one bank of the river, the barons covered the flat of Runnymede on the other. Their delegates met on the 15th of June in the island between them, but the negotiations were a mere cloak to cover John's purpose of unconditional submission. The Great Charter was discussed and agreed to in a single day.

The Great Charter.

Copies of it were made and sent for preservation to the cathedrals and churches, and one copy may still be seen in the British Museum, injured by age and fire, but with the royal seal still hanging from the brown, shrivelled parchment. It is impossible to gaze without reverence on the earliest monument of English freedom which we can see with our own eyes and touch with our own hands, the great Charter to which from age to age men have looked back as the groundwork of English liberty. But in itself the Charter was no novelty, nor did it claim to establish any new constitutional principles. The Charter of Henry the First formed the basis of the whole, and the additions to it are for the most part formal recognitions of the judicial and administrative changes introduced by Henry the Second. What was new in it was its origin. In form, like the Charter on which it was based, it was nothing but a royal grant. In actual fact it was a treaty between the whole English people and its king. In it England found itself for the first time since the Conquest a nation bound together by common national interests, by a common national sympathy. In words which almost close the Charter, the "community of the whole land" is recognized as the great body from which the restraining power of the baronage takes its validity. There is no distinction of blood or class, of Norman or not

Norman, of noble or not noble. All are recognized as Englishmen, the rights of all are owned as English rights. Bishops and nobles claimed and secured at Runnymede the rights not of baron and churchman only but those of freeholder and merchant, of townsman and villein. The provisions against wrong and extortion which the barons drew up as against the King for themselves they drew up as against themselves for their tenants. Based too as it professed to be on Henry's Charter it was far from being a mere copy of what had gone before. The vague expressions of the old Charter were now exchanged for precise and elaborate provisions. The bonds of unwritten custom which the older grant did little more than recognize had proved too weak to hold the Angevins; and the baronage set them aside for the restraints of written and defined law. It is in this way that the Great Charter marks the transition from the age of traditional rights, preserved in the nation's memory and officially declared by the Primate, to the age of written legislation, of Parliaments and Statutes, which was to come.

Its opening indeed is in general terms. The Church had shown its power of self-defence in the struggle over the interdict, and the clause which recognized its rights alone retained the older and general form. But all vagueness ceases when the Charter passes on to deal with the rights of Englishmen at large, their right to justice, to security of person and property, to good government. "No freeman," ran a memorable article that lies at the base of our whole judicial system, "shall be seized or imprisoned, or dispossessed, or outlawed, or in any way brought to ruin: we will not go against any man nor send against him, save by legal judgement of his peers or by the law of the land." "To no man will we sell," runs another, "or deny, or delay, right or justice." The great reforms of the past reigns were now formally recognized; judges of assize were to hold their circuits four times in the year, and the King's Court was no longer to follow the King in his

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wanderings over the realm but to sit in a fixed place. But the denial of justice under John was a small danger compared with the lawless exactions both of himself and his predecessor. Richard had increased the amount of the scutage which Henry the Second had introduced, and applied it to raise funds for his ransom. He had restored the Danegeld, or land-tax, so often abolished, under the new name of "carucage," had seized the wool of the Cistercians and the plate of the churches, and rated movables as well as land. John had again raised the rate of scutage, and imposed aids, fines, and ransoms at his pleasure without counsel of the baronage. The Great Charter met this abuse by a provision on which our constitutional system rests. "No scutage or aid [other than the three customary feudal aids] shall be imposed in our realm save by the common council of the realm;" and to this Great Council it was provided that prelates and the greater barons should be summoned by special writ and all tenants in chief through the sheriffs and bailiffs at least forty days before. The provision defined what had probably been the common usage of the realm; but the definition turned it into a national right, a right so momentous that on it rests our whole Parliamentary life. Even the baronage seem to have been startled when they realized the extent of their claim; and the provision was dropped from the later issue of the Charter at the outset of the next reign. But the clause brought home to the nation at large their possession of a right which became dearer as years went by. More and more clearly the nation discovered that in these simple words lay the secret of political power. It was the right of self-taxation that England fought for under Earl Simon as she fought for it under Hampden. It was the establishment of this right which established English freedom.

The rights which the barons claimed for themselves they claimed for the nation at large. The boon of free and unbought justice was a boon for all, but a special

provision protected the poor. The forfeiture of the freeman on conviction of felony was never to include his tenement, or that of the merchant his wares, or that of the countryman, as Henry the Second had long since ordered, his wain. The means of actual livelihood were to be left even to the worst. The seizure of provisions, the exaction of forced labour, by royal officers was forbidden; and the abuses of the forest system were checked by a clause which disafforested all forests made in John's reign. The under-tenants were protected against all lawless exactions of their lords in precisely the same terms as these were protected against the lawless exactions of the Crown. The towns were secured in the enjoyment of their municipal privileges, their freedom from arbitrary taxation, their rights of justice, of common deliberation, of regulation of trade. "Let the city of London have [illegible] liberties and its free customs, as well by land as by water. Besides this, we will and grant that all cities, and boroughs, and towns, and ports, have all their liberties and free customs." The influence of the trading class is seen in two other enactments by which freedom of journeying and trade was secured to foreign merchants and an uniformity of weights and measures was ordered to be enforced throughout the realm.

There remained only one question, and that [illegible] difficult of all; the question how to secure this order which the Charter established in the actual government of the realm. It was easy to sweep away the immediate abuses; the hostages were restored to their homes, the foreigners banished by a clause in the Charter from the country. But it was less easy to provide means for the control of a King whom no man could trust. By the treaty as settled at Runnymede a council of twenty-four barons were to be chosen from the general body of their order to enforce on John the observance of the Charter with the right of declaring war on the King should its provisions be infringed, and it was provided that the Charter

annuls the Charter.

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should not only be published throughout the whole country but sworn to at every hundred-mote and town-mote by order from the King. "They have given me four-and-twenty over-kings," cried John in a burst of fury, flinging himself on the floor and gnawing sticks and straw in his impotent rage. But the rage soon passed into the subtle policy of which he was a master. After a few days he left Windsor; and lingered for months along the southern shore, waiting for news of the aid he had solicited from Rome and from the Continent. It was not without definite purpose that he had become the vassal of the Papacy. While Innocent was dreaming of a vast Christian Empire with the Pope at its head to enforce justice and religion on his under-kings, John believed [illegible] protection would enable him to rule a[illegible] would. The thunders of the Papacy were [illegible] and for his protection, as the armies of Engla[illegible]d to protect the vileness and oppression of a T[illegible]n or a Nizam of Hyderabad. His envoys were [illegible] Rome, pleading for a condemnation of the Charter. [illegible]he after action of the Papacy shows that Innocent was moved by no hostility to English freedom. But he was indignant that a matter which might have been brought before his court of appeal as [illegible] should have been dealt with by armed revolt, and in this crisis both his imperious pride and the legal tendency of his mind swayed him to the side of the King who submitted to his justice. He annulled the Great Charter by a bull in August, and at the close of the year excommunicated the barons.

Landing of Lewis.

His suspension of Stephen Langton from the exercize of his office as Primate was a more fatal blow. Langton hurried to Rome, and his absence left the barons without a head at a moment when the very success of their efforts was dividing them. Their forces were already disorganized when autumn brought a host of foreign soldiers from over sea to the King's standard. After

starving Rochester into submission John found himself strong enough to march ravaging through the Midland and Northern counties, while his mercenaries spread like locusts over the whole face of the land. From Berwick the King turned back triumphant to coop up his enemies in London while fresh Papal excommunications fell on the barons and the city. But the burghers set Innocent at defiance. "The ordering of secular matters appertaineth not to the Pope," they said, in words that seem like mutterings of the coming Lollardism; and at the advice of Simon Langton, the Archbishop's brother, bells swung out and mass was celebrated as [illegible] access however was impossible for the undiscip[illegible]ountry and the towns against the tra[illegible] King, and despair drove the barons to [illegible]Walter and the French party in their ranks, [illegible] over sea. Philip had long been waiti[illegible]unity for his revenge upon John. In the A[illegible]16 his son Lewis accepted the crown in spite of [illegible]t's excommunications, and landed soo[illegible] with a considerable force. As the barons [illegible] French mercenaries who constituted John[illegible] to fight against the French sovereign and [illegible]ect of affairs was suddenly reversed. D[illegible] the bulk of his troops [illegible] King was forced t[illegible] back [illegible] Welsh Marches, while his rival e[illegible]n and received the submission of the larger pa[illegible]nd. Only Dover held out obstinately against Lewis. By a series of rapid marches John succeeded in distracting the plans of the barons and in relieving Lincoln; then after a short stay at Lynn he crossed the Wash in a fresh movement to the north. In crossing however his army was surprized by the tide, and his baggage with the royal treasures washed away. Fever seized the baffled tyrant as he reached the Abbey of Swineshead, his sickness was inflamed by a gluttonous debauch, and on the 19th of October John breathed his last at Newark.

Innocent

CHAPTER II.

HENRY THE THIRD.

1216—1232.

William Marshal.

THE death [redacted] whole face of English affairs. His son, He[redacted] was but nine years old, and the pity which [redacted] the child's helplessness was aided by a sens[redacted] in burthening him with the iniquity of his fa[redacted] death John had driven from his side even the [redacted] of his barons; but William Marshal had clung to [redacted] the last, and with him was Guala, the Legate of I[redacted] suc[redacted]r, Honorius the Third. The position of G[redacted] entative of the Papal over-lord of the realm [redacted] ghest importance, and his action showed the [redacted] Rome towards English freedom. The boy- [redacted] crowned at Gloucester when Legate and [redacted] s name the very Charter against wh[redacted] ed fighting. Only the clauses which regul[redacted] e summoning of parliament were as yet de[redacted]ed to be suspended. The choice of William Marshal as "governor of King and kingdom" gave weight to this step; and its effect was seen when the contest was renewed in 1217. Lewis was at first successful in the eastern counties, but the political reaction was aided by jealousies which broke out between the English and French nobles in his force, and the first drew gradually away from him. So general was the defection that at the opening of summer William Marshal felt himself strong enough for a blow at his foes

Lewis himself was investing Dover and a joint army of French and English barons under the Count of Perche and Robert Fitz-Walter was besieging Lincoln when gathering troops rapidly from the royal castles the regent marched to the relief of the latter town. Cooped up in its narrow streets and attacked at once by the Earl and the garrison, the barons fled in utter rout; the Count of Perche fell on the field, Robert Fitz-Walter was taken prisoner. Lewis at once retreated on London and called for aid from France. But a more terrible defeat crushed his remaining hopes. A small English fleet which set sail from Dover under Hubert de Burgh fell boldly on the reinforcements which were crossing under escort of Eustace the Monk, a well-known freebooter of the Channel. Some incidents of the fight light up for us the naval warfare of the time. From the decks of the English vessels bowmen poured their arrows into the crowded transports, others hurled quicklime into their enemies' faces, while the more active vessels crashed with their armed prows into the sides of the French ships. The skill of the mariners of the Cinque Ports turned the day against the larger forces of their opponents, and the fleet of Eustace was utterly destroyed. The royal army at once closed upon London, but resistance was really at an end. By a treaty concluded at Lambeth in September Lewis promised to withdraw from England on payment of a sum which he claimed as debt; his adherents were restored to their possessions, the liberties of London and other towns confirmed, and the prisoners on either side set at liberty. A fresh issue of the Charter, though in its modified form, proclaimed yet more clearly the temper and policy of the Earl Marshal.

Hubert de Burgh.

His death at the opening of 1219, after a year spent in giving order to the realm, brought no change in the system he had adopted. The control of affairs passed into the hands of a new legate, Pandulf, of Stephen Langton who had just returned forgiven from Rome, and of the Justiciar, Hubert de Burgh. It was a time of transition, and the

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temper of the Justiciar was eminently transitional. Bred in the school of Henry the Second, Hubert had little sympathy with national freedom, and though resolute to maintain the Charter he can have had small love for it; his conception of good government, like that of his master, lay in a wise personal administration, in the preservation of order and law. But he combined with this a thoroughly English desire for national independence, a hatred of foreigners, and a reluctance to waste English blood and treasure in Continental struggles. Able as he proved himself, his task was one of no common difficulty. He was hampered by the constant interference of Rome. A Papal legate resided at the English court, and claimed a share in the administration of the realm as the representative of its over-lord and as guardian of the young sovereign. A foreign party too had still a footing in the kingdom, for William Marshal had been unable to rid himself of men like Peter des Roches or Faukes de Breauté, who had fought on the royal side in the struggle against Lewis. Hubert had to deal too with the anarchy which that struggle left behind it. From the time of the Conquest the centre of England had been covered with the domains of great houses, whose longings were for feudal independence and whose spirit of revolt had been held in check partly by the stern rule of the Kings and partly by the rise of a baronage sprung from the Court and settled for the most part in the North. The oppression of John united both the earlier and these newer houses in the struggle for the Charter. But the character of each remained unchanged, and the close of the struggle saw the feudal party break out in their old lawlessness and defiance of the Crown.

Order restored.

For a time the anarchy of Stephen's days seemed to revive But the Justiciar was resolute to crush it, and he was backed by the strenuous efforts of Stephen Langton. A new and solemn coronation of the young King in 1220 was followed by a demand for the restoration of the royal castles which had been seized by the barons and foreigners.

The Earl of Chester, the head of the feudal baronage, though he rose in armed rebellion, quailed before the march of Hubert and the Primate's threats of excommunication. A more formidable foe remained in the Frenchman, Faukes de Breauté, the sheriff of six counties, with six royal castles in his hands, and allied both with the rebel barons and Llewelyn of Wales. But in 1224 his castle of Bedford was besieged for two months; and on its surrender the stern justice of Hubert hung the twenty-four knights and their retainers who formed the garrison before its walls. The blow was effectual; the royal castles were surrendered by the barons, and the land was once more at peace. Freed from foreign soldiery, the country was freed also from the presence of the foreign legate. Langton wrested a promise from Rome that so long as he lived no future legate should be sent to England, and with Pandulf's resignation in 1221 the direct interference of the Papacy in the government of the realm came to an end. But even these services of the Primate were small compared with his services to English freedom. Throughout his life the Charter was the first object of his care. The omission of the articles which restricted the royal power over taxation in the Charter which was published at Henry's accession in 1216 was doubtless due to the Archbishop's absence and disgrace at Rome. The suppression of disorder seems to have revived the older spirit of resistance among the royal ministers; for when Langton demanded a fresh confirmation of the Charter in Parliament at London William Brewer, one of the King's councillors, protested that it had been extorted by force and was without legal validity. "If you loved the King, William," the Primate burst out in anger, "you would not throw a stumblingblock in the way of the peace of the realm." The young King was cowed by the Archbishop's wrath, and promised observance of the Charter. But it may have been their consciousness of such a temper among the royal councillors that made Langton and the baronage demand two years later a fresh

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promulgation of the Charter as the price of a subsidy, and Henry's assent established the principle, so fruitful of constitutional results, that redress of wrongs precedes a grant to the Crown.

State of the Church.

These repeated sanctions of the Charter and the government of the realm year after year in accordance with its provisions were gradually bringing the new freedom home to the mass of Englishmen. But the sense of liberty was at this time quickened and intensified by a religious movement which stirred English society to its depths. Never had the priesthood wielded such boundless power over Christendom as in the days of Innocent the Third and his immediate successors. But its religious hold on the people was loosening day by day. The old reverence for the Papacy was fading away before the universal resentment at its political ambition, its lavish use of interdict and excommunication for purely secular ends, its degradation of the most sacred sentences into means of financial extortion. In Italy the struggle that was opening between Rome and Frederick the Second disclosed a spirit of scepticism which among the Epicurean poets of Florence denied the immortality of the soul and attacked the very foundations of the faith itself. In Southern Gaul, Languedoc and Provence had embraced the heresy of the Albigenses and thrown off all allegiance to the Papacy. Even in England, though there were no signs as yet of religious revolt, and though the political action of Rome had been in the main on the side of freedom, there was a spirit of resistance to its interference with national concerns which broke out in the struggle against John. "The Pope has no part in secular matters," had been the reply of London to the interdict of Honorius. And within the English Church itself there was much to call for reform. Its attitude in the strife for the Charter as well as the after work of the Primate had made it more popular than ever; but its spiritual energy was less than its political. The disuse of preaching, the decline of the monastic

orders into rich landowners, the non-residence and ignorance of the parish-priests lowered the religious influence of the clergy. The abuses of the time foiled even the energy of such men as Bishop Grosseteste of Lincoln. His constitutions forbid the clergy to haunt taverns, to gamble, to share in drinking bouts, to mix in the riot and debauchery of the life of the baronage. But such prohibitions witness to the prevalence of the evils they denounce. Bishops and deans were still withdrawn from their ecclesiastical duties to act as ministers, judges, or ambassadors. Benefices were heaped in hundreds at a time on royal favourites like John Mansel. Abbeys absorbed the tithes of parishes and then served them by half-starved vicars, while exemptions purchased from Rome shielded the scandalous lives of canons and monks from all episcopal discipline. And behind all this was a group of secular statesmen and scholars, the successors of such critics as Walter Map, waging indeed no open warfare with the Church, but noting with bitter sarcasm its abuses and its faults.

The Friars.

To bring the world back again within the pale of the Church was the aim of two religious orders which sprang suddenly to life at the opening of the thirteenth century. The zeal of the Spaniard Dominic was roused at the sight of the lordly prelates who sought by fire and sword to win the Albigensian heretics to the faith. "Zeal," he cried, "must be met by zeal, lowliness by lowliness, false sanctity by real sanctity, preaching lies by preaching truth." His fiery ardour and rigid orthodoxy were seconded by the mystical piety, the imaginative enthusiasm of Francis of Assisi. The life of Francis falls like a stream of tender light across the darkness of the time. In the frescoes of Giotto or the verse of Dante we see him take Poverty for his bride. He strips himself of all, he flings his very clothes at his father's feet, that he may be one with Nature and God. His passionate verse claims the moon for his sister and the sun for his brother, he calls on his brother

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the Wind, and his sister the Water. His last faint cry was a "Welcome, Sister Death!" Strangely as the two men differed from each other, their aim was the same—to convert the heathen, to extirpate heresy, to reconcile knowledge with orthodoxy, above all to carry the Gospel to the poor. The work was to be done by an utter reversal of the older monasticism, by seeking personal salvation in effort for the salvation of their fellow-men, by exchanging the solitary of the cloister for the preacher, the monk for the "brother" or friar. To force the new "brethren" into entire dependence on those among whom they laboured their vow of Poverty was turned into a stern reality; the "Begging Friars" were to subsist solely on alms, they might possess neither money nor lands, the very houses in which they lived were to be held in trust for them by others. The tide of popular enthusiasm which welcomed their appearance swept before it the reluctance of Rome, the jealousy of the older orders, the opposition of the parochial priesthood. Thousands of brethren gathered in a few years round Francis and Dominic; and the begging preachers, clad in coarse frock of serge with a girdle of rope round their waist, wandered barefooted as missionaries over Asia, battled with heresy in Italy and Gaul, lectured in the Universities, and preached and toiled among the poor.

The Friars and the Towns.

To the towns especially the coming of the Friars was a religious revolution. They had been left for the most part to the worst and most ignorant of the clergy, the mass-priest, whose sole subsistence lay in his fees. Burgher and artizan were left to spell out what religious instruction they might from the gorgeous ceremonies of the Church's ritual or the scriptural pictures and sculptures which were graven on the walls of its minsters. We can hardly wonder at the burst of enthusiasm which welcomed the itinerant preacher whose fervid appeal, coarse wit, and familiar story brought religion into the fair and the market place. In England, where the Black Friars of Dominic,

arrived in 1221, the Grey Friars of Francis in 1224, both were received with the same delight. As the older orders had chosen the country, the Friars chose the town. They had hardly landed at Dover before they made straight for London and Oxford. In their ignorance of the road the first two Grey Brothers lost their way in the woods between Oxford and Baldon, and fearful of night and of the floods turned aside to a grange of the monks of Abingdon. Their ragged clothes and foreign gestures, as they prayed for hospitality, led the porter to take them for jongleurs, the jesters and jugglers of the day, and the news of this break in the monotony of their lives brought prior, sacrist, and cellarer to the door to welcome them and witness their tricks. The disappointment was too much for the temper of the monks, and the brothers were kicked roughly from the gate to find their night's lodging under a tree. But the welcome of the townsmen made up everywhere for the ill-will and opposition of both clergy and monks. The work of the Friars was physical as well as moral. The rapid progress of population within the boroughs had outstripped the sanitary regulations of the Middle Ages, and fever or plague or the more terrible scourge of leprosy festered in the wretched hovels of the suburbs. It was to haunts such as these that Francis had pointed his disciples, and the Grey Brethren at once fixed themselves in the meanest and poorest quarters of each town. Their first work lay in the noisome lazar-houses; it was amongst the lepers that they commonly chose the site of their homes. At London they settled in the shambles of Newgate; at Oxford they made their way to the swampy ground between its walls and the streams of Thames. Huts of mud and timber, as mean as the huts around them, rose within the rough fence and ditch that bounded the Friary. The order of Francis made a hard fight against the taste for sumptuous buildings and for greater personal comfort which characterized the time. "I did not enter into religion to build walls," protested an English provincial when the brethren

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pressed for a larger house; and Albert of Pisa ordered a stone cloister which the burgesses of Southampton had built for them to be razed to the ground. "You need no little mountains to lift your heads to heaven," was his scornful reply to a claim for pillows. None but the sick went shod. An Oxford Friar found a pair of shoes one morning, and wore them at matins. At night he dreamed that robbers leapt on him in a dangerous pass between Gloucester and Oxford with shouts of "Kill, kill!" "I am a friar," shrieked the terror-stricken brother. "You lie," was the instant answer, "for you go shod." The Friar lifted up his foot in disproof, but the shoe was there. In an agony of repentance he woke and flung the pair out of window.

Revival of Theology.

It was with less success that the order struggled against the passion of the time for knowledge. Their vow of poverty, rigidly interpreted as it was by their founders, would have denied them the possession of books or materials for study. "I am your breviary, I am your breviary," Francis cried passionately to a novice who asked for a psalter. When the news of a great doctor's reception was brought to him at Paris, his countenance fell. "I am afraid, my son," he replied, "that such doctors will be the destruction of my vineyard. They are the true doctors who with the meekness of wisdom show forth good works for the edification of their neighbours." One kind of knowledge indeed their work almost forced on them. The popularity of their preaching soon led them to the deeper study of theology; within a short time after their establishment in England we find as many as thirty readers or lecturers appointed at Hereford, Leicester, Bristol, and other places, and a regular succession of teachers provided at each University. The Oxford Dominicans lectured on theology in the nave of their new church while philosophy was taught in the cloister. The first provincial of the Grey Friars built a school in their Oxford house and persuaded Grosseteste to lecture there. His influence after his promotion to the

see of Lincoln was steadily exerted to secure theological study among the Friars, as well as their establishment in the University; and in this work he was ably seconded by his scholar, Adam Marsh, or de Marisco, under whom the Franciscan school at Oxford attained a reputation throughout Christendom. Lyons, Paris, and Köln borrowed from it their professors: it was through its influence indeed that Oxford rose to a position hardly inferior to that of Paris itself as a centre of scholasticism.[a] But the result of this powerful impulse was soon seen to be fatal to the wider intellectual activity which had till now characterized the Universities. Theology in its scholastic form resumed its supremacy in the schools. Its only efficient rivals were practical studies such as medicine and law. The last, as he was by far the greatest, instance of the freer and wider culture which had been the glory of the last century, was Roger Bacon, and no name better illustrates the rapidity and completeness with which it passed away.

Roger Bacon.

Roger Bacon was the child of royalist parents who were driven into exile and reduced to poverty by the civil wars. From Oxford, where he studied under Edmund of Abingdon to whom he owed his introduction to the works of Aristotle, he passed to the University of Paris, and spent his whole heritage there in costly studies and experiments. "From my youth up," he writes, "I have laboured at the sciences and tongues. I have sought the friendship of all men among the Latins who had any reputation for knowledge. I have caused youths to be instructed in languages, geometry, arithmetic, the construction of tables and instruments, and many needful things besides." The difficulties in the way of such studies as he had resolved to pursue were immense. He was without instruments or means of experiment. "Without mathematical instruments no science can be mastered," he complains afterwards, "and these instruments are not to be found among the Latins, nor could they be made for two or three hundred

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pounds. Besides, better tables are indispensably necessary, tables on which the motions of the heavens are certified from the beginning to the end of the world without daily labour, but these tables are worth a king's ransom and could not be made without a vast expense. I have often attempted the composition of such tables, but could not finish them through failure of means and the folly of those whom I had to employ." Books were difficult and sometimes even impossible to procure. "The scientific works of Aristotle, of Avicenna, of Seneca, of Cicero, and other ancients cannot be had without great cost; their principal works have not been translated into Latin, and copies of others are not to be found in ordinary libraries or elsewhere. The admirable books of Cicero de Republica are not to be found anywhere, so far as I can hear, though I have made anxious enquiry for them in different parts of the world, and by various messengers. I could never find the works of Seneca, though I made diligent search for them during twenty years and more. And so it is with many more most useful books connected with the science of morals." It is only words like these of his own that bring home to us the keen thirst for knowledge, the patience, the energy of Roger Bacon. He returned as a teacher to Oxford, and a touching record of his devotion to those whom he taught remains in the story of John of London, a boy of fifteen, whose ability raised him above the general level of his pupils. "When he came to me as a poor boy," says Bacon in recommending him to the Pope, "I caused him to be nurtured and instructed for the love of God, especially since for aptitude and innocence I have never found so towardly a youth. Five or six years ago I caused him to be taught in languages, mathematics, and optics, and I have gratuitously instructed him with my own lips since the time that I received your mandate. There is no one at Paris who knows so much of the root of philosophy, though he has not produced the branches, flowers, and fruit because of his youth, and because he has

had no experience in teaching. But he has the means of surpassing all the Latins if he live to grow old and goes on as he has begun."

The pride with which he refers to his system of instruction was justified by the wide extension which he gave to scientific teaching in Oxford. It is probably of himself that he speaks when he tells us that "the science of optics has not hitherto been lectured on at Paris or elsewhere among the Latins, save twice at Oxford." It was a science on which he had laboured for ten years. But his teaching seems to have fallen on a barren soil. From the moment when the Friars settled in the Universities scholasticism absorbed the whole mental energy of the student world. The temper of the age was against scientific or philosophical studies. The older enthusiasm for knowledge was dying down; the study of law was the one source of promotion, whether in Church or state; philosophy was discredited, literature in its purer forms became almost extinct. After forty years of incessant study, Bacon found himself in his own words "unheard, forgotten, buried." He seems at one time to have been wealthy, but his wealth was gone. "During the twenty years that I have specially laboured in the attainment of wisdom, abandoning the path of common men, I have spent on these pursuits more than two thousand pounds, not to mention the cost of books, experiments, instruments, tables, the acquisition of languages, and the like. Add to all this the sacrifices I have made to procure the friendship of the wise and to obtain well-instructed assistants." Ruined and baffled in his hopes, Bacon listened to the counsels of his friend Grosseteste and renounced the world. He became a friar of the order of St. Francis, an order where books and study were looked upon as hindrances to the work which it had specially undertaken, that of preaching among the masses of the poor. He had written little. So far was he from attempting to write that his new superiors prohibited him from

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publishing anything under pain of forfeiture of the book and penance of bread and water. But we can see the craving of his mind, the passionate instinct of creation which marks the man of genius, in the joy with which he seized a strange opportunity that suddenly opened before him. "Some few chapters on different subjects, written at the entreaty of friends," seem to have got abroad, and were brought by one of the Pope's chaplains under the notice of Clement the Fourth. The Pope at once invited Bacon to write. But difficulties stood in his way. Materials, transcription, and other expenses for such a work as he projected would cost at least £60, and the Pope sent not a penny. Bacon begged help from his family, but they were ruined like himself. No one would lend to a mendicant friar, and when his friends raised the money he needed it was by pawning their goods in the hope of repayment from Clement. Nor was this all; the work itself, abstruse and scientific as was its subject, had to be treated in a clear and popular form to gain the Papal ear. But difficulties which would have crushed another man only roused Roger Bacon to an almost superhuman energy. By the close of 1267 the work was done. The "greater work," itself in modern form a closely printed folio, with its successive summaries and appendices in the "lesser" and the "third" works (which make a good octavo more) were produced and forwarded to the Pope within fifteen months.

The Opus Magus.

No trace of this fiery haste remains in the book itself. The "Opus Magus" is alike wonderful in plan and detail. Bacon's main purpose, in the words of Dr. Whewell, is "to urge the necessity of a reform in the mode of philosophizing, to set forth the reasons why knowledge had not made a greater progress, to draw back attention to sources of knowledge which had been unwisely neglected, to discover other sources which were yet wholly unknown, and to animate men to the undertaking by a prospect of the vast advantages which it offered." The developement of his

scheme is on the largest scale; he gathers together the whole knowledge of his time on every branch of science which it possessed, and as he passes them in review he suggests improvements in nearly all. His labours, both here and in his after works, in the field of grammar and philology, his perseverance in insisting on the necessity of correct texts, of an accurate knowledge of languages, of an exact interpretation, are hardly less remarkable than his scientific investigations. From grammar he passes to mathematics, from mathematics to experimental philosophy. Under the name of mathematics indeed was included all the physical science of the time. "The neglect of it for nearly thirty or forty years," pleads Bacon passionately, "hath nearly destroyed the entire studies of Latin Christendom. For he who knows not mathematics cannot know any other sciences; and what is more, he cannot discover his own ignorance or find its proper remedies." Geography, chronology, arithmetic, music, are brought into something of scientific form, and like rapid sketches are given of the question of climate, hydrography, geography, and astrology. The subject of optics, his own especial study, is treated with greater fulness; he enters into the question of the anatomy of the eye besides discussing problems which lie more strictly within the province of optical science. In a word, the "Greater Work," to borrow the phrase of Dr. Whewell, is "at once the Encyclopædia and the Novum Organum of the thirteenth century." The whole of the afterworks of Roger Bacon —and treatise after treatise has of late been disentombed from our libraries—are but developements in detail of the magnificent conception he laid before Clement. Such a work was its own great reward. From the world around Roger Bacon could look for and found small recognition. No word of acknowledgement seems to have reached its author from the Pope. If we may credit a more recent story, his writings only gained him a prison from his order. "Unheard, forgotten, buried," the old man

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died as he had lived, and it has been reserved for later ages to roll away the obscurity that had gathered round his memory, and to place first in the great roll of modern science the name of Roger Bacon.

Scholasticism.

The failure of Bacon shows the overpowering strength of the drift towards the practical studies, and above all towards theology in its scholastic guise. Aristotle, who had been so long held at bay as the most dangerous foe of mediæval faith, was now turned by the adoption of his logical method in the discussion and definition of theological dogma into its unexpected ally. It was this very method that led to "that unprofitable subtlety and curiosity" which Lord Bacon notes as the vice of the scholastic philosophy. But "certain it is"—to continue the same great thinker's comment on the Friars—"that if these schoolmen to their great thirst of truth and unwearied travel of wit had joined variety of reading and contemplation, they had proved excellent lights to the great advancement of all learning and knowledge." What, amidst all their errors, they undoubtedly did was to insist on the necessity of rigid demonstration and a more exact use of words, to introduce a clear and methodical treatment of all subjects into discussion, and above all to substitute an appeal to reason for unquestioning obedience to authority. It was by this critical tendency, by the new clearness and precision which scholasticism gave to enquiry, that in spite of the trivial questions with which it often concerned itself it trained the human mind through the next two centuries to a temper which fitted it to profit by the great disclosure of knowledge that brought about the Renascence. And it is to the same spirit of fearless enquiry as well as to the strong popular sympathies which their very constitution necessitated that we must attribute the influence which the Friars undoubtedly exerted in the coming struggle between the people and the Crown. Their position is clearly and strongly marked throughout the whole contest. The

University of Oxford, which soon fell under the direction of their teaching, stood first in its resistance to Papal exactions and its claim of English liberty. The classes in the towns, on whom the influence of the Friars told most directly, were steady supporters of freedom throughout the Barons' Wars.

Its Political Influence.

Politically indeed the teaching of the schoolmen was of immense value, for it set on a religious basis and gave an intellectual form to the constitutional theory of the relations between King and people which was slowly emerging from the struggle with the Crown. In assuming the responsibility of a Christian king to God for the good government of his realm, in surrounding the pledges whether of ruler or ruled with religious sanctions, the mediæval Church entered its protest against any personal despotism. The schoolmen pushed further still to the doctrine of a contract between king and people; and their trenchant logic made short work of the royal claims to irresponsible power and unquestioning obedience. "He who would be in truth a king," ran a poem which embodies their teaching at this time in pungent verse—"he is a 'free king' indeed if he rightly rule himself and his realm. All things are lawful to him for the government of his realm, but nothing is lawful to him for its destruction. It is one thing to rule according to a king's duty, another to destroy a kingdom by resisting the law." "Let the community of the realm advise, and let it be known what the generality, to whom their laws are best known, think on the matter. They who are ruled by the laws know those laws best; they who make daily trial of them are best acquainted with them; and since it is their own affairs which are at stake they will take the more care and will act with an eye to their own peace." "It concerns the community to see what sort of men ought justly to be chosen for the weal of the realm." The constitutional restrictions on the royal authority, the right of the whole nation to deliberate and decide on its own affairs

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and to have a voice in the selection of the administrators of government, had never been so clearly stated before. But the importance of the Friar's work lay in this, that the work of the scholar was supplemented by that of the popular preacher. The theory of government wrought out in cell and lecture-room was carried over the length and breadth of the land by the mendicant brother, begging his way from town to town, chatting with farmer or housewife at the cottage door, and setting up his portable pulpit in village green or market-place. His open-air sermons, ranging from impassioned devotion to coarse story and homely mother wit, became the journals as well as the homilies of the day; political and social questions found place in them side by side with spiritual matters; and the rudest countryman learned his tale of a king's oppression or a patriot's hopes as he listened to the rambling passionate, humorous discourse of the begging friar.

Henry the Third.

Never had there been more need of such a political education of the whole people than at the moment we have reached. For the triumph of the Charter, the constitutional government of Governor and Justiciar, had rested mainly on the helplessness of the King. As boy or youth, Henry the Third had bowed to the control of William Marshal or Langton or Hubert de Burgh. But he was now grown to manhood, and his character was from this hour to tell on the events of his reign. From the cruelty, the lust, the impiety of his father the young King was absolutely free. There was a geniality, a vivacity, a refinement in his temper which won a personal affection for him even in his worst days from some who bitterly censured his rule. The Abbey-church of Westminster, with which he replaced the ruder minster of the Confessor, remains a monument of his artistic taste. He was a patron and friend of men of letters, and himself skilled in the "gay science" of the troubadour. But of the political capacity which was the characteristic of his house he had little or none.

Profuse, changeable, false from sheer meanness of spirit, impulsive alike in good and ill, unbridled in temper and tongue, reckless in insult and wit, Henry's delight was in the display of an empty and prodigal magnificence, his one notion of government was a dream of arbitrary power. But frivolous as the King's mood was, he clung with a weak man's obstinacy to a distinct line of policy; and this was the policy not of Hubert or Langton but of John. He cherished the hope of recovering his heritage across the sea. He believed in the absolute power of the Crown; and looked on the pledges of the Great Charter as promises which force had wrested from the King and which force could wrest back again. France was telling more and more on English opinion; and the claim which the French kings were advancing to a divine and absolute power gave a sanction in Henry's mind to the claim of absolute authority which was still maintained by his favourite advisers in the royal council. Above all he clung to the alliance with the Papacy. Henry was personally devout; and his devotion only bound him the more firmly to his father's system of friendship with Rome. Gratitude and self-interest alike bound him to the Papal See. Rome had saved him from ruin as a child; its legate had set the crown on his head; its threats and excommunications had foiled Lewis and built up again a royal party. Above all it was Rome which could alone free him from his oath to the Charter, and which could alone defend him if like his father he had to front the baronage in arms.

England and Rome.

His temper was now to influence the whole system of government. In 1227 Henry declared himself of age; and though Hubert still remained Justiciar every year saw him more powerless in his struggle with the tendencies of the King. The death of Stephen Langton in 1228 was a yet heavier blow to English freedom. In persuading Rome to withdraw her Legate the Primate had averted a conflict between the national desire for self-government

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and the Papal claims of overlordship. But his death gave the signal for a more serious struggle, for it was in the oppression of the Church of England by the Popes through the reign of Henry that the little rift first opened which was destined to widen into the gulf that parted the one from the other at the Reformation. In the mediæval theory of the Papacy, as Innocent and his successors held it, Christendom, as a spiritual realm of which the Popes were the head, took the feudal form of the secular realms which lay within its pale. The Pope was its sovereign, the Bishops were his barons, and the clergy were his under vassals. As the King demanded aids and subsidies in case of need from his liegemen, so in the theory of Rome might the head of the Church demand aid in need from the priesthood. And at this moment the need of the Popes was sore. Rome had plunged into her desperate conflict with the Emperor, Frederick the Second, and was looking everywhere for the means of recruiting her drained exchequer. On England she believed herself to have more than a spiritual claim for support. She regarded the kingdom as a vassal kingdom, and as bound to aid its overlord. It was only by the promise of a heavy subsidy that Henry in 1229 could buy the Papal confirmation of Langton's successor. But the baronage was of other mind than Henry as to this claim of overlordship, and the demand of an aid to Rome from the laity was at once rejected by them. Her spiritual claim over the allegiance of the clergy however remained to fall back upon, and the clergy were in the Pope's hand. Gregory the Ninth had already claimed for the Papal see a right of nomination to some prebends in each cathedral church; he now demanded a tithe of all the moveables of the priesthood, and a threat of excommunication silenced their murmurs. Exaction followed exaction as the needs of the Papal treasury grew greater. The very rights of lay patrons were set aside, and under the name of "reserves" presentations to English benefices were sold in the Papal

market, while Italian clergy were quartered on the best livings of the Church.

Fall of Hubert de Burgh.

The general indignation at last found vent in a wide conspiracy. In 1231 letters from "the whole body of those who prefer to die rather than be ruined by the Romans" were scattered over the kingdom by armed men; tithes gathered for the Pope or the foreign priests were seized and given to the poor; the Papal collectors were beaten and their bulls trodden under foot. The remonstrances of Rome only made clearer the national character of the movement; but as enquiry went on the hand of the Justiciar himself was seen to have been at work. Sheriffs had stood idly by while violence was done; royal letters had been shown by the rioters as approving their acts; and the Pope openly laid the charge of the outbreak on the secret connivance of Hubert de Burgh. No charge could have been more fatal to Hubert in the mind of the King. But he was already in full collision with the Justiciar on other grounds. Henry was eager to vindicate his right to the great heritage his father had lost: the Gascons, who still clung to him, not because they loved England but because they hated France, spurred him to war; and in 1229 a secret invitation came from the Norman barons. But while Hubert held power no serious effort was made to carry on a foreign strife. The Norman call was rejected through his influence, and when a great armament gathered at Portsmouth for a campaign in Poitou it dispersed for want of transport and supplies. The young King drew his sword and rushed madly on the Justiciar, charging him with treason and corruption by the gold of France. But the quarrel was appeased and the expedition deferred for the year. In 1230 Henry actually took the field in Britanny and Poitou, but the failure of the campaign was again laid at the door of Hubert whose opposition was said to have prevented a decisive engagement. It was at this moment that the Papal accusation filled up the measure of Henry's wrath against his minister. In the

summer of 1232 he was deprived of his office of Justiciar, and dragged from a chapel at Brentwood where threats of death had driven him to take sanctuary. A smith who was ordered to shackle him stoutly refused. "I will die any death" he said "before I put iron on the man who freed England from the stranger and saved Dover from France." The remonstrances of the Bishop of London forced the King to replace Hubert in sanctuary, but hunger compelled him to surrender; he was thrown a prisoner into the Tower, and though soon released he remained powerless in the realm. His fall left England without a check to the rule of Henry himself.

CHAPTER III.

THE BARONS' WAR.

1232—1272.

ONCE master of his realm, Henry the Third was quick to declare his plan of government. The two great checks on a merely personal rule lay as yet in the authority of the great ministers of State and in the national character of the administrative body which had been built up by Henry the Second. Both of these checks Henry at once set himself to remove. He would be his own minister. The Justiciar ceased to be the Lieutenant-General of the King and dwindled into a presiding judge of the law-courts. The Chancellor had grown into a great officer of State, and in 1226 this office had been conferred on the Bishop of Chichester by the advice and consent of the Great Council. But Henry succeeded in wresting the seal from him and naming to this as to other offices at his pleasure. His policy was to entrust all high posts of government to mere clerks of the royal chapel; trained administrators, but wholly dependent on the royal will. He found equally dependent agents of administration by surrounding himself with foreigners. The return of Peter des Roches to the royal councils was the first sign of the new system; and hosts of hungry Poitevins and Bretons were summoned over to occupy the royal castles and fill the judicial and administrative posts about the Court. The King's marriage in 1236 to Eleanor of Provence was followed by the arrival in England of the new Queen's uncles. The

The Aliens.

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"Savoy," as his house in the Strand was named, still recalls Peter of Savoy who arrived five years later to take for a while the chief place at Henry's council-board; another brother, Boniface, was consecrated on Archbishop Edmund's death to the highest post in the realm save the Crown itself, the Archbishoprick of Canterbury. The young Primate, like his brother, brought with him foreign fashions strange enough to English folk. His armed retainers pillaged the markets. His own archiepiscopal fist felled to the ground the prior of St. Bartholomew-by-Smithfield who opposed his visitation. London was roused by the outrage; on the King's refusal to do justice a noisy crowd of citizens surrounded the Primate's house at Lambeth with cries of vengeance, and the "handsome archbishop," as his followers styled him, was glad to escape over sea. This brood of Provençals was followed in 1243 by the arrival of the Poitevin relatives of John's queen, Isabella of Angoulême. Aymer was made Bishop of Winchester; William of Valence received at a later time the earldom of Pembroke. Even the King's jester was a Poitevin. Hundreds of their dependants followed these great nobles to find a fortune in the English realm. The Poitevin lords brought in their train a bevy of ladies in search of husbands, and three English earls who were in royal wardship were wedded by the King to foreigners. The whole machinery of administration passed into the hands of men who were ignorant and contemptuous of the principles of English government or English law. Their rule was a mere anarchy; the very retainers of the royal household turned robbers and pillaged foreign merchants in the precincts of the Court; corruption invaded the judicature; at the close of this period of misrule Henry de Bath, a justiciary, was proved to have openly taken bribes and to have adjudged to himself disputed estates.

Henry and the Baronage.

That misgovernment of this kind should have gone on unchecked in defiance of the provisions of the Charter was owing to the disunion and sluggishness of the English

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baronage. On the first arrival of the foreigners Richard, the Earl Mareschal, a son of the great Regent, stood forth as their leader to demand the expulsion of the strangers from the royal Council. Though deserted by the bulk of the nobles he defeated the foreign troops sent against him and forced the King to treat for peace. But at this critical moment the Earl was drawn by an intrigue of Peter des Roches to Ireland; he fell in a petty skirmish, and the barons were left without a head. The interposition of a new primate, Edmund of Abingdon, forced the King to dismiss Peter from court; but there was no real change of system, and the remonstrances of the Archbishop and of Robert Grosseteste, the Bishop of Lincoln, remained fruitless. In the long interval of misrule the financial straits of the King forced him to heap exaction on exaction. The Forest Laws were used as a means of extortion, sees and abbeys were kept vacant, loans were wrested from lords and prelates, the Court itself lived at free quarters wherever it moved. Supplies of this kind however were utterly insufficient to defray the cost of the King's prodigality. A sixth of the royal revenue was wasted in pensions to foreign favourites. The debts of the Crown amounted to four times its annual income. Henry was forced to appeal for aid to the great Council of the realm, and aid was granted in 1237 on promise of control in its expenditure and on condition that the King confirmed the Charter. But Charter and promise were alike disregarded; and in 1242 the resentment of the barons expressed itself in a determined protest and a refusal of further subsidies. In spite of their refusal however Henry gathered money enough for a costly expedition for the recovery of Poitou. The attempt ended in failure and shame. At Taillebourg the King's force fled in disgraceful rout before the French as far as Saintes, and only the sudden illness of Lewis the Ninth and a disease which scattered his army saved Bordeaux from the conquerors. The treasury was utterly drained, and

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Henry was driven in 1244 to make a fresh appeal with his own mouth to the baronage. But the barons had now rallied to a plan of action, and we can hardly fail to attribute their union to the man who appears at their head. This was the Earl of Leicester, Simon of Montfort.

Simon of Montfort.

Simon was the son of another Simon of Montfort, whose name had become memorable for his ruthless crusade against the Albigensian heretics in Southern Gaul, and who had inherited the Earldom of Leicester through his mother, a sister and co-heiress of the last Earl of the house of Beaumont. But as Simon's tendencies were for the most part French John had kept the revenues of the earldom in his own hands, and on his death the claim of his elder son, Amaury, was met by the refusal of Henry the Third to accept a divided allegiance. The refusal marks the rapid growth of that sentiment of nationality which the loss of Normandy had brought home. Amaury chose to remain French, and by a family arrangement with the King's sanction the honour of Leicester passed in 1231 to his younger brother Simon. His choice made Simon an Englishman, but his foreign blood still moved the jealousy of the barons, and this jealousy was quickened by a secret match in 1238 with Eleanor, the King's sister and widow of the second William Marshal. The match formed probably part of a policy which Henry pursued throughout his reign of bringing the great earldoms into closer connexion with the Crown. That of Chester had fallen to the King through the extinction of the family of its earls; Cornwall was held by his brother, Richard; Salisbury by his cousin. Simon's marriage linked the Earldom of Leicester to the royal house. But it at once brought Simon into conflict with the nobles and the Church. The baronage, justly indignant that such a step should have been taken without their consent, for the Queen still remained childless and Eleanor's children by one whom they looked on as a stranger promised to be heirs of the Crown, rose in a revolt which

failed only through the desertion of their head, Earl Richard of Cornwall, who was satisfied with Earl Simon's withdrawal from the Royal Council. The censures of the Church on Eleanor's breach of a vow of chaste widowhood which she had made at her first husband's death were averted with hardly less difficulty by a journey to Rome. It was after a year of trouble that Simon returned to England to reap as it seemed the fruits of his high alliance. He was now formally made Earl of Leicester and re-entered the Royal Council. But it is probable that he still found there the old jealousy which had forced from him a pledge of retirement after his marriage; and that his enemies now succeeded in winning over the King. In a few months, at any rate, he found the changeable King alienated from him, he was driven by a burst of royal passion from the realm, and was forced to spend seven months in France.

Simon's early action.

Henry's anger passed as quickly as it had risen, and in the spring of 1240 the Earl was again received with honour at court. It was from this moment however that his position changed. As yet it had been that of a foreigner, confounded in the eyes of the nation at large with the Poitevins and Provençals who swarmed about the court. But in the years of retirement which followed Simon's return to England his whole attitude was reversed. There was as yet no quarrel with the King: he followed him in a campaign across the Channel, and shared in his defeat at Saintes. But he was a friend of Grosseteste and a patron of the Friars, and became at last known as a steady opponent of the misrule about him. When prelates and barons chose twelve representatives to confer with Henry in 1244 Simon stood with Earl Richard of Cornwall at the head of them. A definite plan of reform disclosed his hand. The confirmation of the Charter was to be followed by the election of Justiciar, Chancellor, Treasurer in the Great Council. Nor was this restoration of a responsible ministry enough; a perpetual Council was to attend the King and devise further reforms. The plan broke against

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Henry's resistance and a Papal prohibition; but from this time the Earl took his stand in the front rank of the patriot leaders. The struggle of the following years was chiefly with the exactions of the Papacy, and Simon was one of the first to sign the protest which the Parliament in 1246 addressed to the court of Rome. He was present at the Lent Parliament of 1248, and we can hardly doubt that he shared in its bold rebuke of the King's misrule and its renewed demand for the appointment of the higher officers of state by the Council. It was probably a sense of the danger of leaving at home such a centre of all efforts after reform that brought Henry to send him in the autumn of 1248 as Seneschal of Gascony to save for the Crown the last of its provinces over sea.

Simon in Gascony.

Threatened by France and by Navarre without as well as by revolt within, the loss of Gascony seemed close at hand; but in a few months the stern rule of the new Seneschal had quelled every open foe within or without its bounds. To bring the province to order proved a longer and a harder task. Its nobles were like the robber-nobles of the Rhine: "they rode the country by night," wrote the Earl, "like thieves, in parties of twenty or thirty or forty," and gathered in leagues against the Seneschal, who set himself to exact their dues to the Crown and to shield merchant and husbandman from their violence. For four years Earl Simon steadily warred down these robber bands, storming castles where there was need, and bridling the wilder country with a chain of forts. Hard as the task was, his real difficulty lay at home. Henry sent neither money nor men; and the Earl had to raise both from his own resources, while the men whom he was fighting found friends in Henry's council-chamber. Again and again Simon was recalled to answer charges of tyranny and extortion made by the Gascon nobles and pressed by his enemies at home on the King. Henry's feeble and impulsive temper left him open to pressure like this; and though each absence of the Earl from the province was a signal for fresh outbreaks of disorder which

only his presence repressed, the deputies of its nobles were still admitted to the council-table and commissions sent over to report on the Seneschal's administration. The strife came to a head in 1252, when the commissioners reported that stern as Simon's rule had been the case was one in which sternness was needful. The English barons supported Simon, and in the face of their verdict Henry was powerless. But the King was now wholly with his enemies; and his anger broke out in a violent altercation. The Earl offered to resign his post if the money he had spent was repaid him, and appealed to Henry's word. Henry hotly retorted that he was bound by no promise to a false traitor. Simon at once gave Henry the lie; "and but that thou bearest the name of King it had been a bad hour for thee when thou utteredst such a word!" A formal reconciliation was brought about, and the Earl once more returned to Gascony, but before winter had come he was forced to withdraw to France. The greatness of his reputation was shown in an offer which its nobles made him of the regency of their realm during the absence of King Lewis from the land. But the offer was refused; and Henry, who had himself undertaken the pacification of Gascony, was glad before the close of 1253 to recall its old ruler to do the work he had failed to do.

Simon's temper.

The Earl's character had now thoroughly developed. He inherited the strict and severe piety of his father; he was assiduous in his attendance on religious services whether by night or day. In his correspondence with Adam Marsh we see him finding patience under his Gascon troubles in a perusal of the Book of Job. His life was pure and singularly temperate; he was noted for his scant indulgence in meat, drink, or sleep. Socially he was cheerful and pleasant in talk; but his natural temper was quick and ardent, his sense of honour keen, his speech rapid and trenchant. His impatience of contradiction, his fiery temper, were in fact the great stumbling-blocks in his after career. His best friends marked honestly

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this fault, and it shows the greatness of the man that he listened to their remonstrances. "Better is a patient man," writes honest Friar Adam, "than a strong man, and he who can rule his own temper than he who storms a city." But the one characteristic which overmastered all was what men at that time called his "constancy," the firm immoveable resolve which trampled even death under foot in its loyalty to the right. The motto which Edward the First chose as his device, "Keep troth," was far truer as the device of Earl Simon. We see in his correspondence with what a clear discernment of its difficulties both at home and abroad he "thought it unbecoming to decline the danger of so great an exploit" as the reduction of Gascony to peace and order; but once undertaken, he persevered in spite of the opposition he met with, the failure of all support or funds from England, and the King's desertion of his cause, till the work was done. There was the same steadiness of will and purpose in his patriotism. The letters of Robert Grosseteste show how early Simon had learned to sympathize with the Bishop in his resistance to Rome, and at the crisis of the contest he offered him his own support and that of his associates. But Robert passed away, and as the tide of misgovernment mounted higher and higher the Earl silently trained himself for the day of trial. The fruit of his self-discipline was seen when the crisis came. While other men wavered and faltered and fell away, the enthusiastic love of the people clung to the grave, stern soldier who "stood like a pillar," unshaken by promise or threat or fear of death, by the oath he had sworn.

Matthew Paris.

While Simon had been warring with Gascon rebels affairs in England had been going from bad to worse. The scourge of Papal taxation fell heavier on the clergy. After vain appeals to Rome and to the King, Archbishop Edmund retired to an exile of despair at Pontigny, and tax-gatherer after tax-gatherer with powers of excommunication, suspension from orders, and presentation to benefices,

descended on the unhappy priesthood. The wholesale pillage kindled a wide spirit of resistance. Oxford gave the signal by hunting a papal legate out of the city amid cries of "usurer" and "simoniac" from the mob of students. Fulk Fitz-Warenne in the name of the barons bade a Papal collector begone out of England. "If you tarry here three days longer," he added, "you and your company shall be cut to pieces." For a time Henry himself was swept away by the tide of national indignation. Letters from the King, the nobles, and the prelates, protested against the Papal exactions, and orders were given that no money should be exported from the realm. But the threat of interdict soon drove Henry back on a policy of spoliation in which he went hand in hand with Rome. The temper which this oppression begot among even the most sober churchmen has been preserved for us by an annalist whose pages glow with the new outburst of patriotic feeling. Matthew Paris is the greatest, as he in reality is the last, of our monastic historians. The school of St. Alban's survived indeed till a far later time, but its writers dwindle into mere annalists whose view is bounded by the abbey precincts and whose work is as colourless as it is jejune. In Matthew the breadth and precision of the narrative, the copiousness of his information on topics whether national or European, the general fairness and justice of his comments, are only surpassed by the patriotic fire and enthusiasm of the whole. He had succeeded Roger of Wendover as chronicler at St. Alban's; and the Greater Chronicle with an abridgement of it which long passed under the name of Matthew of Westminster, a "History of the English," and the "Lives of the Earlier Abbots," are only a few among the voluminous works which attest his prodigious industry. He was an artist as well as an historian, and many of the manuscripts which are preserved are illustrated by his own hand. A large circle of correspondents—bishops like Grosseteste, ministers like Hubert de Burgh, officials like Alexander

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de Swereford—furnished him with minute accounts of political and ecclesiastical proceedings. Pilgrims from the East and Papal agents brought news of foreign events to his scriptorium at St. Alban's. He had access to and quotes largely from state documents, charters, and exchequer rolls. The frequency of royal visits to the abbey brought him a store of political intelligence, and Henry himself contributed to the great chronicle which has preserved with so terrible a faithfulness the memory of his weakness and misgovernment. On one solemn feast-day the King recognized Matthew, and bidding him sit on the middle step between the floor and the throne begged him to write the story of the day's proceedings. While on a visit to St. Alban's he invited him to his table and chamber, and enumerated by name two hundred and fifty of the English baronies for his information. But all this royal patronage has left little mark on his work. "The case," as Matthew says, "of historical writers is hard, for if they tell the truth they provoke men, and if they write what is false they offend God." With all the fullness of the school of court historians, such as Benedict and Hoveden, to which in form he belonged Matthew Paris combines an independence and patriotism which is strange to their pages. He denounces with the same unsparing energy the oppression of the Papacy and of the King. His point of aim is neither that of a courtier nor of a churchman but of an Englishman, and the new national tone of his chronicle is but the echo of a national sentiment which at last bound nobles and yeomen and churchmen together into a people resolute to wrest freedom from the Crown.

Wales.

The nation was outraged like the Church. Two solemn confirmations of the Charter failed to bring about any compliance with its provisions. In 1248, in 1249, and again in 1255 the great Council fruitlessly renewed its demand for a regular ministry, and the growing resolve of the nobles to enforce good government was seen in their offer of a grant on condition that the great officers of the

Crown were appointed in the Council of the Baronage. But Henry refused their offer with scorn and sold his plate to the citizens of London to find payment for his household. A spirit of mutinous defiance broke out on the failure of all legal remedy. When the Earl of Norfolk refused him aid Henry answered with a threat. "I will send reapers and reap your fields for you," he said. "And I will send you back the heads of your reapers," replied the Earl. Hampered by the profusion of the court and the refusal of supplies, the Crown was in fact penniless; and yet never was money more wanted, for a trouble which had long pressed upon the English kings had now grown to a height that called for decisive action. Even his troubles at home could not blind Henry to the need of dealing with the difficulty of Wales. Of the three Welsh states into which all that remained unconquered of Britain had been broken by the victories of Deorham and Chester, two had long ceased to exist. The country between the Clyde and the Dee had been gradually absorbed by the conquests of Northumbria and the growth of the Scot monarchy. West Wales, between the British Channel and the estuary of the Severn, had yielded to the sword of Ecgberht. But a fiercer resistance prolonged the independence of the great central portion which alone in modern language preserves the name of Wales. Comprizing in itself the largest and most powerful of the British kingdoms, it was aided in its struggle against Mercia by the weakness of its assailant, the youngest and feeblest of the English states, as well as by an internal warfare which distracted the energies of the invaders. But Mercia had no sooner risen to supremacy among the English kingdoms than it took the work of conquest vigorously in hand. Offa tore from Wales the border land between the Severn and the Wye; the raids of his successors carried fire and sword into the heart of the country; and an acknowledgement of the Mercian over-lordship was wrested from the Welsh princes. On the fall of

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Mercia this overlordship passed to the West-Saxon kings, and the Laws of Howel Dda own the payment of a yearly tribute by "the prince of Aberffraw" to "the King of London." The weakness of England during her long struggle with the Danes revived the hopes of British independence; it was the co-operation of the Welsh on which the Northmen reckoned in their attack on the house of Ecgberht. But with the fall of the Danelagh the British princes were again brought to submission, and when in the midst of the Confessor's reign the Welsh seized on a quarrel between the houses of Leofric and Godwine to cross the border and carry their attacks into England itself, the victories of Harold re-asserted the English supremacy. Disembarking on the coast his light-armed troops he penetrated to the heart of the mountains, and the successors of the Welsh prince Gruffydd, whose head was the trophy of the campaign, swore to observe the old fealty and render the whole tribute to the English Crown.

Wales and the Normans.

A far more desperate struggle began when the wave of Norman conquest broke on the Welsh frontier. A chain of great earldoms, settled by William along the border-land, at once bridled the old marauding forays. From his county palatine of Chester Hugh the Wolf harried Flintshire into a desert, Robert of Belesme in his earldom of Shrewsbury "slew the Welsh," says a chronicler, "like sheep, conquered them, enslaved them and flayed them with nails of iron." The earldom of Gloucester curbed Britain along the lower Severn. Backed by these greater baronies a horde of lesser adventurers obtained the royal "licence to make conquest on the Welsh." Monmouth and Abergavenny were seized and guarded by Norman castellans; Bernard of Neufmarché won the lordship of Brecknock; Roger of Montgomery raised the town and fortress in Powysland which still preserves his name. A great rising of the whole people in the days of the second William won back some of this Norman spoil. The new castle of Montgomery was burned, Brecknock and Cardigan

were cleared of the invaders, and the Welsh poured ravaging over the English border. Twice the Red King carried his arms fruitlessly among the mountains against enemies who took refuge in their fastnesses till famine and hardship drove his broken host into retreat. The wiser policy of Henry the First fell back on his father's system of gradual conquest. A new tide of invasion flowed along the southern coast, where the land was level and open and accessible from the sea. The attack was aided by strife in the country itself. Robert Fitz-Hamo, the lord of Gloucester, was summoned to his aid by a Welsh chieftain; and his defeat of Rhys ap Tewdor, the last prince under whom Southern Wales was united, produced an anarchy which enabled Robert to land safely on the coast of Glamorgan, to conquer the country round, and to divide it among his soldiers. A force of Flemings and Englishmen followed the Earl of Clare as he landed near Milford Haven and pushing back the British inhabitants settled a "Little England" in the present Pembrokeshire. A few daring adventurers accompanied the Norman Lord of Kemeys into Cardigan, where land might be had for the winning by any one who would "wage war on the Welsh."

The Welsh Revival.

It was at this moment, when the utter subjugation of the British race seemed at hand, that a new outburst of energy rolled back the tide of invasion and changed the fitful resistance of the separate Welsh provinces into a national effort to regain independence. To all outer seeming Wales had become utterly barbarous. Stripped of every vestige of the older Roman civilization by ages of bitter warfare, of civil strife, of estrangement from the general culture of Christendom, the unconquered Britons had sunk into a mass of savage herdsmen, clad in the skins and fed by the milk of the cattle they tended. Faithless, greedy, and revengeful, retaining no higher political organization than that of the clan, their strength was broken by ruthless feuds, and they were united only in battle or in raid against the stranger. But in the heart of the wild people

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there still lingered a spark of the poetic fire which had nerved it four hundred years before through Aneurin and Llywarch Hen to its struggle with the earliest Englishmen. At the hour of its lowest degradation the silence of Wales was suddenly broken by a crowd of singers. The song of the twelfth century burst forth, not from one bard or another, but from the nation at large. The Welsh temper indeed was steeped in poetry. "In every house," says the shrewd Gerald du Barri, "strangers who arrived in the morning were entertained till eventide with the talk of maidens and the music of the harp." A romantic literature, which was destined to leaven the fancy of western Europe, had grown up among this wild people and found an admirable means of utterance in its tongue. The Welsh language was as real a developement of the old Celtic language heard by Cæsar as the Romance tongues are developements of Cæsar's Latin, but at a far earlier date than any other language of modern Europe it had attained to definite structure and to settled literary form. No other mediæval literature shows at its outset the same elaborate and completed organization as that of the Welsh. But within these settled forms the Celtic fancy played with a startling freedom. In one of the later poems Gwion the Little transforms himself into a hare, a fish, a bird, a grain of wheat; but he is only the symbol of the strange shapes in which the Celtic fancy embodies itself in the romantic tales which reached their highest perfection in the legends of Arthur.

The Welsh Poetry.

The gay extravagance of these "Mabinogion" flings defiance to all fact, tradition, probability, and revels in the impossible and unreal. When Arthur sails into the unknown world it is in a ship of glass. The "descent into hell," as a Celtic poet paints it, shakes off the mediæval horror with the mediæval reverence, and the knight who achieves the quest spends his years of infernal durance in hunting and minstrelsy, and in converse with fair women. The world of the

Mabinogion is a world of pure phantasy, a new earth of marvels and enchantments, of dark forests whose silence is broken by the hermit's bell and sunny glades where the light plays on the hero's armour. Each figure as it moves across the poet's canvas is bright with glancing colour. "The maiden was clothed in a robe of flame-coloured silk, and about her neck was a collar of ruddy gold in which were precious emeralds and rubies. Her head was of brighter gold than the flower of the broom, her skin was whiter than the foam of the wave, and fairer were her hands and her fingers than the blossoms of the wood-anemone amidst the spray of the meadow fountain. The eye of the trained hawk, the glance of the falcon, was not brighter than hers. Her bosom was more snowy than the breast of the white swan, her cheek was redder than the reddest roses." Everywhere there is an Oriental profusion of gorgeous imagery, but the gorgeousness is seldom oppressive. The sensibility of the Celtic temper, so quick to perceive beauty, so eager in its thirst for life, its emotions, its adventures, its sorrows, its joys, is tempered by a passionate melancholy that expresses its revolt against the impossible, by an instinct of what is noble, by a sentiment that discovers the weird charm of nature. The wildest extravagance of the tale-teller is relieved by some graceful play of pure fancy, some tender note of feeling, some magical touch of beauty. As Kalweh's greyhounds bound from side to side of their master's steed, they "sport round him like two sea-swallows." His spear is "swifter than the fall of the dewdrop from the blade of reed-grass upon the earth when the dew of June is at the heaviest." A subtle, observant love of nature and natural beauty takes fresh colour from the passionate human sentiment with which it is imbued. "I love the birds" sings Gwalchmai "and their sweet voices in the lulling songs of the wood;" he watches at night beside the fords "among the untrodden grass" to hear the nightingale and watch the play of the sea-mew.

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Even patriotism takes the same picturesque form. The Welsh poet hates the flat and sluggish land of the Saxon; as he dwells on his own he tells of "its sea-coast and its mountains, its towns on the forest border, its fair landscape, its dales, its waters, and its valleys, its white sea-mews, its beauteous women." Here as everywhere the sentiment of nature passes swiftly and subtly into the sentiment of a human tenderness: "I love its fields clothed with tender trefoil" goes on the song; "I love the marches of Merioneth where my head was pillowed on a snow-white arm." In the Celtic love of woman there is little of the Teutonic depth and earnestness, but in its stead a childlike spirit of delicate enjoyment, a faint distant flush of passion like the rose-light of dawn on a snowy mountain peak, a playful delight in beauty. "White is my love as the apple blossom, as the ocean's spray; her face shines like the pearly dew on Eryri; the glow of her cheeks is like the light of sunset." The buoyant and elastic temper of the French trouveur was spiritualized in the Welsh singers by a more refined poetic feeling. "Whoso beheld her was filled with her love. Four white trefoils sprang up wherever she trod." A touch of pure fancy such as this removes its object out of the sphere of passion into one of delight and reverence.

The Bards.

It is strange to pass from the world of actual Welsh history into such a world as this. But side by side with this wayward, fanciful stream of poesy and romance ran a torrent of intenser song. The spirit of the earlier bards, their joy in battle, their love of freedom, broke out anew in ode after ode, in songs extravagant, monotonous, often prosaic, but fused into poetry by the intense fire of patriotism which glowed within them. Every fight, every hero had its verse. The names of older singers, of Taliesin, Aneurin, and Llywarch Hen, were revived in bold forgeries to animate the national resistance and to prophesy victory. It was in North Wales that the spirit of patriotism received its strongest inspiration from this burst of song.

Again and again Henry the Second was driven to retreat from the impregnable fastnesses where the "Lords of Snowdon," the princes of the house of Gruffydd ap Conan, claimed supremacy over the whole of Wales. Once in the pass of Consilt a cry arose that the King was slain, Henry of Essex flung down the royal standard, and the King's desperate efforts could hardly save his army from utter rout. The bitter satire of the Welsh singers bade him knight his horse, since its speed had alone saved him from capture. In a later campaign the invaders were met by storms of rain, and forced to abandon their baggage in a headlong flight to Chester. The greatest of the Welsh odes, that known to English readers in Gray's translation as "The Triumph of Owen," is Gwalchmai's song of victory over the repulse of an English fleet from Abermenai.

Llewelyn ap Jorwerth.

The long reign of Llewelyn the son of Jorwerth seemed destined to realize the hopes of his countrymen. The homage which he succeeded in extorting from the whole of the Welsh chieftains during a reign which lasted from 1194 to 1240 placed him openly at the head of his race, and gave a new character to its struggle with the English King. In consolidating his authority within his own domains, and in the assertion of his lordship over the princes of the south, Llewelyn ap Jorwerth aimed steadily at securing the means of striking off the yoke of the Saxon. It was in vain that John strove to buy his friendship by the hand of his natural daughter Johanna. Fresh raids on the Marches forced the King to enter Wales in 1211; but though his army reached Snowdon it fell back like its predecessors, starved and broken before an enemy it could never reach. A second attack in the same year had better success. The chieftains of South Wales were drawn from their new allegiance to join the English forces, and Llewelyn, prisoned in his fastnesses, was at last driven to submit. But the ink of the treaty was hardly dry before Wales was again on fire; a common fear of the English once more united its

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chieftains, and the war between John and his barons soon removed all dread of a new invasion. Absolved from his allegiance to an excommunicated King, and allied with the barons under Fitzwalter—too glad to enlist in their cause a prince who could hold in check the nobles of the border country where the royalist cause was strongest—Llewelyn seized his opportunity to reduce Shrewsbury, to annex Powys, the central district of Wales where the English influence had always been powerful, to clear the royal garrisons from Caermarthen and Cardigan, and to force even the Flemings of Pembroke to do him homage.

Llewelyn and the Bards.

England watched these efforts of the subject race with an anger still mingled with contempt. "Who knows not," exclaims Matthew Paris as he dwells on the new pretensions of the Welsh ruler, "who knows not that the Prince of Wales is a petty vassal of the King of England?" But the temper of Llewelyn's own people was far other than the temper of the English chronicler. The hopes of Wales rose higher and higher with each triumph of the Lord of Snowdon. His court was crowded with bardic singers. "He pours," sings one of them, "his gold into the lap of the bard as the ripe fruit falls from the trees." Gold however was hardly needed to wake their enthusiasm. Poet after poet sang of "the Devastator of England," the "Eagle of men that loves not to lie nor sleep," "towering above the rest of men with his long red lance," his "red helmet of battle crested with a fierce wolf." "The sound of his coming is like the roar of the wave as it rushes to the shore, that can neither be stayed nor hushed." Lesser bards strung together Llewelyn's victories in rough jingle of rime and hounded him on to the slaughter. "Be of good courage in the slaughter," sings Elidir, "cling to thy work, destroy England, and plunder its multitudes." A fierce thirst for blood runs through the abrupt, passionate verses of the court singers. "Swansea, that tranquil town, was broken in heaps," bursts out a triumphant bard; "St. Clears, with its bright white lands, it is not Saxons who hold it now!"

"In Swansea, the key of Lloegria, we made widows of all the wives." "The dread Eagle is wont to lay corpses in rows, and to feast with the leader of wolves and with hovering ravens glutted with flesh, butchers with keen scent of carcases." "Better," closes the song, "better the grave than the life of man who sighs when the horns call him forth to the squares of battle."

The Welsh hopes.

But even in bardic verse Llewelyn rises high out of the mere mob of chieftains who live by rapine, and boast as the Hirlas-horn passes from hand to hand through the hall that "they take and give no quarter." "Tender-hearted, wise, witty, ingenious," he was "the great Cæsar" who was to gather beneath his sway the broken fragments of the Celtic race. Mysterious prophecies, the prophecies of Merlin the Wise which floated from lip to lip and were heard even along the Seine and the Rhine, came home again to nerve Wales to its last struggle with the stranger. Medrawd and Arthur, men whispered, would appear once more on earth to fight over again the fatal battle of Camlan in which the hero-king perished. The last conqueror of the Celtic race, Cadwallon, still lived to combat for his people. The supposed verses of Taliesin expressed the undying hope of a restoration of the Cymry. "In their hands shall be all the land from Brittany to Man: . . . a rumour shall arise that the Germans are moving out of Britain back again to their fatherland." Gathered up in the strange work of Geoffry of Monmouth, these predictions had long been making a deep impression not on Wales only but on its conquerors. It was to meet the dreams of a yet living Arthur that the grave of the legendary hero-king at Glastonbury was found and visited by Henry the Second. But neither trick nor conquest could shake the firm faith of the Celt in the ultimate victory of his race. "Think you," said Henry to a Welsh chieftain who joined his host, "that your people of rebels can withstand my army?" "My people," replied the chieftain, "may be weakened by your might, and even

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in great part destroyed, but unless the wrath of God be on the side of its foe it will not perish utterly. Nor deem I that other race or other tongue will answer for this corner of the world before the Judge of all at the last day save this people and tongue of Wales." So ran the popular rime, "Their Lord they will praise, their speech they shall keep, their land they shall lose—except wild Wales."

The Provisions of Oxford.

Faith and prophecy seemed justified by the growing strength of the British people. The weakness and dissensions which characterized the reign of Henry the Third enabled Llewelyn ap Jorwerth to preserve a practical independence till the close of his life, when a fresh acknowledgement of the English supremacy was wrested from him by Archbishop Edmund. But the triumphs of his arms were renewed by Llewelyn the son of Gryffydd, who followed him in 1246. The raids of the new chieftain swept the border to the very gates of Chester, while his conquest of Glamorgan seemed to bind the whole people together in a power strong enough to meet any attack from the stranger. So pressing was the danger that it called the King's eldest son, Edward, to the field; but his first appearance in arms ended in a crushing defeat. The defeat however remained unavenged. Henry's dreams were of mightier enterprizes than the reduction of the Welsh. The Popes were still fighting their weary battle against the House of Hohenstaufen, and were offering its kingdom of Sicily, which they regarded as a forfeited fief of the Holy See, to any power that would aid them in the struggle. In 1254 it was offered to the King's second son, Edmund. With imbecile pride Henry accepted the offer, prepared to send an army across the Alps, and pledged England to repay the sums which the Pope was borrowing for the purposes of his war. In a Parliament at the opening of 1257 he demanded an aid and a tenth from the clergy. A fresh demand was made in 1258. But the patience of the realm was at last exhausted. Earl Simon had returned

in 1253 from his government of Gascony, and the fruit of his meditations during the four years of his quiet stay at home, a quiet broken only by short embassies to France and Scotland which showed there was as yet no open quarrel with Henry, was seen in a league of the baronage and in their adoption of a new and startling policy. The past half century had shown both the strength and weakness of the Charter: its strength as a rallying-point for the baronage and a definite assertion of rights which the King could be made to acknowledge; its weakness in providing no means for the enforcement of its own stipulations. Henry had sworn again and again to observe the Charter and his oath was no sooner taken than it was unscrupulously broken. The barons had secured the freedom of the realm; the secret of their long patience during the reign of Henry lay in the difficulty of securing its right administration. It was this difficulty which Earl Simon was prepared to solve when action was forced on him by the stir of the realm. A great famine added to the sense of danger from Wales and from Scotland and to the irritation at the new demands from both Henry and Rome with which the year 1258 opened. It was to arrange for a campaign against Wales that Henry called a parliament in April. But the baronage appeared in arms with Gloucester and Leicester at their head. The King was forced to consent to the appointment of a committee of twenty-four to draw up terms for the reform of the state. The Twenty-four again met the Parliament at Oxford in June, and although half the committee consisted of royal ministers and favourites it was impossible to resist the tide of popular feeling. Hugh Bigod, one of the firmest adherents of the two Earls, was chosen as Justiciar. The claim to elect this great officer was in fact the leading point in the baronial policy. But further measures were needed to hold in check such arbitrary misgovernment as had prevailed during the past twenty years. By the "Provisions of Oxford" it was agreed that the Great Council

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should assemble thrice in the year, whether summoned by the King or no; and on each occasion "the Commonalty shall elect twelve honest men who shall come to the Parliaments, and at other times when occasion shall be when the King and his Council shall send for them, to treat of the wants of the King and of his kingdom. And the Commonalty shall hold as established that which these Twelve shall do." Three permanent committees of barons and prelates were named to carry out the work of reform and administration. The reform of the Church was left to the original Twenty-Four; a second Twenty-Four negotiated the financial aids; a Permanent Council of Fifteen advised the King in the ordinary work of Government. The complexity of such an arrangement was relieved by the fact that the members of each of these committees were in great part the same persons. The Justiciar, Chancellor, and the guardians of the King's castles swore to act only with the advice and assent of the Permanent Council, and the first two great officers, with the Treasurer, were to give account of their proceedings to it at the end of the year. Sheriffs were to be appointed for a single year only, no doubt by the Council, from among the chief tenants of the county, and no undue fees were to be exacted for the administration of justice in their court.

Government of the Barons.

A royal proclamation in the English tongue, the first in that tongue since the Conquest which has reached us, ordered the observance of these Provisions. The King was in fact helpless, and resistance came only from the foreign favourites, who refused to surrender the castles and honours which had been granted to them. But the Twenty-four were resolute in their action; and an armed demonstration of the barons drove the foreigners in flight over sea. The whole royal power was now in fact in the hands of the committees appointed by the Great Council. But the measures of the barons showed little of the wisdom and energy which the country had hoped for. In October

1259 the knighthood complained that the barons had done nothing but seek their own advantage in the recent changes. This protest produced the Provisions of Westminster, which gave protection to tenants against their feudal lords, regulated legal procedure in the feudal courts, appointed four knights in each shire to watch the justice of the sheriffs, and made other temporary enactments for the furtherance of justice. But these Provisions brought little fruit, and a tendency to mere feudal privilege showed itself in an exemption of all nobles and prelates from attendance at the Sheriff's courts. Their foreign policy was more vigorous and successful. All further payment to Rome, whether secular or ecclesiastical, was prohibited formal notice was given to the Pope of England's withdrawal from the Sicilian enterprize, peace put an end to the incursions of the Welsh, and negotiations on the footing of a formal abandonment of the King's claim to Normandy, Anjou, Maine, Touraine, and Poitou ended in October, 1259, in a peace with France.

Simon and the Baronage.

This peace, the triumph of that English policy which had been struggling ever since the days of Hubert de Burgh with the Continental policy of Henry and his foreign advisers, was the work of the Earl of Leicester. The revolution had doubtless been mainly Simon's doing. In the summer of 1258, while the great change was going on, a thunder storm drove the King as he passed along the river to the house of the Bishop of Durham where the Earl was then sojourning. Simon bade Henry take shelter with him and have no fear of the storm. The King refused with petulant wit. "If I fear the thunder, I fear you, Sir Earl, more than all the thunder in the world." But Simon had probably small faith in the cumbrous system of government which the Barons devised, and it was with reluctance that he was brought to swear to the Provisions of Oxford which embodied it. With their home government he had little to do, for from the autumn of 1258 to that of 1259 he was chiefly busied in negotiation in France.

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But already his breach with Gloucester and the bulk of his fellow councillors was marked. In the Lent Parliament of 1259 he had reproached them, and Gloucester above all, with faithlessness to their trust. "The things we are treating of," he cried, "we have sworn to carry out. With such feeble and faithless men I care not to have ought to do!" The peace with France was hardly signed when his distrust of his colleagues was verified. Henry's withdrawal to the French court at the close of the year for the formal signature of the treaty was the signal for a reactionary movement. From France the King forbade the summoning of a Lent Parliament in 1260 and announced his resumption of the enterprize against Sicily. Both acts were distinct breaches of the Provisions of Oxford, but Henry trusted to the divisions of the Twenty-Four. Gloucester was in open feud with Leicester; the Justiciar, Hugh Bigod, resigned his office in the spring; and both of these leaders drew cautiously to the King. Roger Mortimer and the Earls of Hereford and Norfolk more openly espoused the royal cause, and in February 1260 Henry had gained confidence enough to announce that as the barons had failed to keep their part of the Provisions he should not keep his.

The Counter Revolution.

Earl Simon almost alone remained unshaken. But his growing influence was seen in the appointment of his supporter, Hugh Despenser, as Justiciar in Bigod's place, while his strength was doubled by the accession of the King's son Edward to his side. In the moment of the revolution Edward had vehemently supported the party of the foreigners. But he had sworn to observe the Provisions, and the fidelity to his pledge which remained throughout his life the chief note of his temper at once showed itself. Like Simon he protested against the faithlessness of the barons in the carrying out of their reforms, and it was his strenuous support of the petition of the knighthood that brought about the additional Provisions of 1259. He had been brought up with Earl Simon's sons, and with the Earl

himself his relations remained friendly even at the later time of their fatal hostilities. But as yet he seems to have had no distrust of Simon's purposes or policy. His adhesion to the Earl recalled Henry from France; and the King was at once joined by Gloucester in London while Edward and Simon remained without the walls. But the love of father and son proved too strong to bear political severance, and Edward's reconciliation foiled the Earl's plans. He withdrew to the Welsh border, where fresh troubles were breaking out, while Henry prepared to deal his final blow at the government which, tottering as it was, still held him in check. Rome had resented the measures which had put an end to her extortions, and it was to Rome that Henry looked for a formal absolution from his oath to observe the Provisions. In June 1261 he produced a Bull annulling the Provisions and freeing him from his oath in a Parliament at Winchester. The suddenness of the blow forbade open protest and Henry quickly followed up his victory. Hugh Bigod, who had surrendered the Tower and Dover in the spring, surrendered the other castles he held in the autumn. Hugh Despenser was deposed from the Justiciarship and a royalist, Philip Basset, appointed in his place.

Simon's rising.

The news of this counter-revolution reunited for a moment the barons. Gloucester joined Earl Simon in calling an autumn Parliament at St. Alban's, and in summoning to it three knights from every shire south of Trent. But the union was a brief one. Gloucester consented to refer the quarrel with the King to arbitration and the Earl of Leicester withdrew in August to France. He saw that for the while there was no means of withstanding Henry, even in his open defiance of the Provisions. Foreign soldiers were brought into the land; the King won back again the appointment of sheriffs. For eighteen months of this new rule Simon could do nothing but wait. But his long absence lulled the old jealousies against him. The confusion of the realm and a fresh outbreak of troubles

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in Wales renewed the disgust at Henry's government, while his unswerving faithfulness to the Provisions fixed the eyes of all Englishmen upon the Earl as their natural leader. The death of Gloucester in the summer of 1262 removed the one barrier to action; and in the spring of 1263 Simon landed again in England as the unquestioned head of the baronial party. What immediately forced him to action was a march of Edward with a body of foreign troops against Llewelyn, who was probably by this time in communication if not in actual alliance with the Earl. The chief opponents of Llewelyn among the Marcher Lords were ardent supporters of Henry's misgovernment, and when a common hostility drew the Prince and Earl together, the constitutional position of Llewelyn as an English noble gave formal justification for co-operation with him. At Whitsuntide the barons met Simon at Oxford and finally summoned Henry to observe the Provisions. His refusal was met by an appeal to arms. Throughout the country the younger nobles flocked to Simon's standard, and the young Earl of Gloucester, Gilbert of Clare, became his warmest supporter. His rapid movements foiled all opposition. While Henry vainly strove to raise money and men, Simon swept the Welsh border, marched through Reading on Dover, and finally appeared before London.

Mise of Amiens.

The Earl's triumph was complete. Edward after a brief attempt at resistance was forced to surrender Windsor and disband his foreign troops. The rising of London in the cause of the barons left Henry helpless. But at the moment of triumph the Earl saw himself anew forsaken. The bulk of the nobles again drew towards the King; only six of the twelve barons who had formed the patriot half of the committee of 1258, only four of the twelve representatives of the community at that date, were now with the Earl. The dread too of civil war gave strength to the cry for a compromise, and at the end of the year it was agreed that the strife should be left to the arbitration of

the French King, Lewis the Ninth. But saint and just ruler as he was, the royal power was in the conception of Lewis a divine thing, which no human power could limit or fetter, and his decision, which was given in January 1264, annulled the whole of the Provisions. Only the Charters granted before the Provisions were to be observed. The appointment and removal of all officers of state was to be wholly with the King, and he was suffered to call aliens to his councils if he would. The Mise of Amiens was at once confirmed by the Pope, and crushing blow as it was, the barons felt themselves bound by the award. It was only the exclusion of aliens—a point which they had not purposed to submit to arbitration—which they refused to concede. Luckily Henry was as inflexible on this point as on the rest, and the mutual distrust prevented any real accommodation.

Battle of Lewes.

But Henry had to reckon on more than the baronage. Deserted as he was by the greater nobles, Simon was far from standing alone. Throughout the recent struggle the new city governments of the craft-gilds, which were known by the name of "Communes," had shown an enthusiastic devotion to his cause. The Queen was stopped in her attempt to escape from the Tower by an angry mob, who drove her back with stones and foul words. When Henry attempted to surprize Leicester in his quarters at Southwark, the Londoners burst the gates which had been locked by the richer burghers against him, and rescued him by a welcome into the city. The clergy and the universities went in sympathy with the towns, and in spite of the taunts of the royalists, who accused him of seeking allies against the nobility in the common people, the popular enthusiasm gave a strength to the Earl which sustained him even in this darkest hour of the struggle. He at once resolved on resistance. The French award had luckily reserved the rights of Englishmen to the liberties they had enjoyed before the Provisions of Oxford, and it was easy for Simon to prove that the arbitrary power it gave to the

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Crown was as contrary to the Charter as to the Provisions themselves. London was the first to reject the decision; in March 1264 its citizens mustered at the call of the town-bell at Saint Paul's, seized the royal officials, and plundered the royal parks. But an army had already mustered in great force at the King's summons, while Leicester found himself deserted by the bulk of the baronage. Every day brought news of ill. A detachment from Scotland joined Henry's forces. The younger De Montfort was taken prisoner. Northampton was captured, the King raised the siege of Rochester, and a rapid march of Earl Simon's only saved London itself from a surprize by Edward. But betrayed as he was, the Earl remained firm to the cause. He would fight to the end, he said, even were he and his sons left to fight alone. With an army reinforced by 15,000 Londoners, he marched in May to the relief of the Cinque Ports which were now threatened by the King. Even on the march he was forsaken by many of the nobles who followed him. Halting at Fletching in Sussex, a few miles from Lewes, where the royal army was encamped, Earl Simon with the young Earl of Gloucester offered the King compensation for all damage if he would observe the Provisions. Henry's answer was one of defiance, and though numbers were against him, the Earl resolved on battle. His skill as a soldier reversed the advantages of the ground; marching at dawn on the 14th of May he seized the heights eastward of the town and moved down these slopes to an attack. His men with white crosses on back and breast knelt in prayer before the battle opened, and all but reached the town before their approach was perceived. Edward however opened the fight by a furious charge which broke the Londoners on Leicester's left. In the bitterness of his hatred for the insult to his mother he pursued them for four miles, slaughtering three thousand men. But he returned to find the battle lost. Crowded in the narrow space between the heights and the river Ouse, a space broken by marshes and

by the long street of the town, the royalist centre and left were crushed by Earl Simon. The Earl of Cornwall, now King of the Romans, who, as the mocking song of the victors ran, "makede him a castel of a mulne post" ("he weened that the mill-sails were mangonels" goes on the sarcastic verse), was taken prisoner, and Henry himself captured. Edward cut his way into the Priory only to join in his father's surrender.

Simon's rule.

The victory of Lewes placed Earl Simon at the head of the state. "Now England breathes in the hope of liberty," sang a poet of the time; "the English were despised like dogs, but now they have lifted up their head and their foes are vanquished." But the moderation of the terms agreed upon in the Mise of Lewes, a convention between the King and his captors, shows Simon's sense of the difficulties of his position. The question of the Provisions was again to be submitted to arbitration; and a parliament in June, to which four knights were summoned from every county, placed the administration till this arbitration was complete in the hands of a new council of nine to be nominated by the Earls of Leicester and Gloucester and the patriotic Bishop of Chichester. Responsibility to the community was provided for by the declaration of a right in the body of barons and prelates to remove either of the Three Electors, who in turn could displace or appoint the members of the Council. Such a constitution was of a different order from the cumbrous and oligarchical committees of 1258. But it had little time to work in. The plans for a fresh arbitration broke down. Lewis refused to review his decision, and all schemes for setting fresh judges between the King and his people were defeated by a formal condemnation of the barons' cause issued by the Pope. Triumphant as he was indeed Earl Simon's difficulties thickened every day. The Queen with Archbishop Boniface gathered an army in France for an invasion; Roger Mortimer with the border barons was still in arms and only held in check by Llewelyn. It was impossible

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to make binding terms with an imprisoned King, yet to release Henry without terms was to renew the war. The imprisonment too gave a shock to public feeling which thinned the Earl's ranks. In the new Parliament which he called at the opening of 1265 the weakness of the patriotic party among the baronage was shown in the fact that only twenty-three earls and barons could be found to sit beside the hundred and twenty ecclesiastics.

Summons of the Commons.

But it was just this sense of his weakness which prompted the Earl to an act that has done more than any incident of this struggle to immortalize his name. Had the strife been simply a strife for power between the king and the baronage the victory of either would have been equally fatal in its results. The success of the one would have doomed England to a royal despotism, that of the other to a feudal aristocracy. Fortunately for our freedom the English baronage had been brought too low by the policy of the kings to be able to withstand the crown single-handed. From the first moment of the contest it had been forced to make its cause a national one. The summons of two knights from each county, elected in its county court, to a Parliament in 1254, even before the opening of the struggle, was a recognition of the political weight of the country gentry which was confirmed by the summons of four knights from every county to the Parliament assembled after the battle of Lewes. The Provisions of Oxford, in stipulating for attendance and counsel on the part of twelve delegates of the "commonalty," gave the first indication of a yet wider appeal to the people at large. But it was the weakness of his party among the baronage at this great crisis which drove Earl Simon to a constitutional change of mighty issue in our history. As before, he summoned two knights from every county. But he created a new force in English politics when he summoned to sit beside them two citizens from every borough. The attendance of delegates from the towns had long been usual in the county courts

when any matter respecting their interests was in question; but it was the writ issued by Earl Simon that first summoned the merchant and the trader to sit beside the knight of the shire, the baron, and the bishop in the parliament of the realm.

Simon's difficulties.

It is only this great event however which enables us to understand the large and prescient nature of Earl Simon's designs. Hardly a few months had passed away since the victory of Lewes when the burghers took their seats at Westminster, yet his government was tottering to its fall. We know little of the Parliament's acts. It seems to have chosen Simon as Justiciar and to have provided for Edward's liberation, though he was still to live under surveillance at Hereford and to surrender his earldom of Chester to Simon, who was thus able to communicate with his Welsh allies. The Earl met the dangers from without with complete success. In September 1264 a general muster of the national forces on Barham Down and a contrary wind put an end to the projects of invasion entertained by the mercenaries whom the Queen had collected in Flanders; the threats of France died away into negotiations; the Papal Legate was forbidden to cross the Channel, and his bulls of excommunication were flung into the sea. But the difficulties at home grew more formidable every day. The restraint upon Henry and Edward jarred against the national feeling of loyalty, and estranged the mass of Englishmen who always side with the weak. Small as the patriotic party among the barons had been from the first, it grew smaller as dissensions broke out over the spoils of victory. The Earl's justice and resolve to secure the public peace told heavily against him. John Giffard left him because he refused to allow him to exact ransom from a prisoner, contrary to the agreement made after Lewes. A greater danger opened when the young Earl of Gloucester, though enriched with the estates of the foreigners, held himself aloof from the Justiciar, and resented Leicester's prohibition of a tournament, his

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naming the wardens of the royal castles by his own authority, his holding Edward's fortresses on the Welsh marches by his own garrisons.

Gloucester's later conduct proves the wisdom of Leicester's precautions. In the spring Parliament of 1265 he openly charged the Earl with violating the Mise of Lewes, with tyranny, and with aiming at the crown. Before its close he withdrew to his own lands in the west and secretly allied himself with Roger Mortimer and the Marcher barons. Earl Simon soon followed him to the west, taking with him the King and Edward. He moved along the Severn, securing its towns, advanced westward to Hereford, and was marching at the end of June along bad roads into the heart of South Wales to attack the fortresses of Earl Gilbert in Glamorgan when Edward suddenly made his escape from Hereford and joined Gloucester at Ludlow. The moment had been skilfully chosen, and Edward showed a rare ability in the movements by which he took advantage of the Earl's position. Moving rapidly along the Severn he seized Gloucester and the bridges across the river, destroyed the ships by which Leicester strove to escape across the Channel to Bristol, and cut him off altogether from England. By this movement too he placed himself between the Earl and his son Simon, who was advancing from the east to his father's relief. Turning rapidly on this second force Edward surprized it at Kenilworth and drove it with heavy loss within the walls of the castle. But the success was more than compensated by the opportunity which his absence gave to the Earl of breaking the line of the Severn. Taken by surprize and isolated as he was, Simon had been forced to seek for aid and troops in an avowed alliance with Llewelyn, and it was with Welsh reinforcements that he turned to the east. But the seizure of his ships and of the bridges of the Severn held him a prisoner in Edward's grasp, and a fierce attack drove him back, with broken and starving forces, into the Welsh hills. In utter despair he struck north-

ward to Hereford; but the absence of Edward now enabled him on the 2nd of August to throw his troops in boats across the Severn below Worcester. The news drew Edward quickly back in a fruitless counter-march to the river, for the Earl had already reached Evesham by a long night march on the morning of the 4th, while his son, relieved in turn by Edward's counter-march, had pushed in the same night to the little town of Alcester. The two armies were now but some ten miles apart, and their junction seemed secured. But both were spent with long marching, and while the Earl, listening reluctantly to the request of the King who accompanied him, halted at Evesham for mass and dinner, the army of the younger Simon halted for the same purpose at Alcester.

Battle of Evesham.

"Those two dinners doleful were, alas!" sings Robert of Gloucester; for through the same memorable night Edward was hurrying back from the Severn by country cross-lanes to seize the fatal gap that lay between them. As morning broke his army lay across the road that led northward from Evesham to Alcester. Evesham lies in a loop of the river Avon where it bends to the south; and a height on which Edward ranged his troops closed the one outlet from it save across the river. But a force had been thrown over the river under Mortimer to seize the bridges, and all retreat was thus finally cut off. The approach of Edward's army called Simon to the front, and for the moment he took it for his son's. Though the hope soon died away a touch of soldierly pride moved him as he recognized in the orderly advance of his enemies a proof of his own training. "By the arm of St. James," he cried, "they come on in wise fashion, but it was from me that they learnt it." A glance however satisfied him of the hopelessness of a struggle; it was impossible for a handful of horsemen with a mob of half-armed Welshmen to resist the disciplined knighthood of the royal army. "Let us commend our souls to God," Simon said to the little group around him, "for our bodies are the foe's." He bade

Hugh Despenser and the rest of his comrades fly from the field. "If he died," was the noble answer, "they had no will to live." In three hours the butchery was over. The Welsh fled at the first onset like sheep, and were cut ruthlessly down in the cornfields and gardens where they sought refuge. The little group of knights around Simon fought desperately, falling one by one till the Earl was left alone. So terrible were his sword-strokes that he had all but gained the hill top when a lance thrust brought his horse to the ground, but Simon still rejected the summons to yield till a blow from behind felled him mortally wounded to the ground. Then with a last cry of "It is God's grace" the soul of the great patriot passed away.

The Royalist reaction.

The triumphant blare of trumpets which welcomed the rescued King into Evesham, "his men weeping for joy," rang out in bitter contrast to the mourning of the realm. It sounded like the announcement of a reign of terror. The rights and laws for which men had toiled and fought so long seemed to have been swept away in an hour. Every town which had supported Earl Simon was held to be at the King's mercy, its franchises to be forfeited. The Charter of Lynn was annulled; London was marked out as the special object of Henry's vengeance, and the farms and merchandize of its citizens were seized as first-fruits of its plunder. The darkness which on that fatal morning hid their books from the monks of Evesham as they sang in choir was but a presage of the gloom which fell on the religious houses. From Ramsey, from Evesham, from St. Alban's rose the same cry of havoc and rapine. But the plunder of monk and burgess was little to the vast sentence of confiscation which the mere fact of rebellion was held to have passed on all the adherents of Earl Simon. To "disinherit" these of their lands was to confiscate half the estates of the landed gentry of England; but the hotter royalists declared them disinherited, and Henry was quick to lavish their lands away on favourites and foreigners. The very chroniclers of their party recall the

pillage with shame. But all thought of resistance lay hushed in a general terror. Even the younger Simon "saw no other rede" than to release his prisoners. His army, after finishing its meal, was again on its march to join the Earl when the news of his defeat met it, heralded by a strange darkness that, rising suddenly in the north-west and following as it were on Edward's track, served to shroud the mutilations and horrors of the battle-field. The news was soon fatally confirmed. Simon himself could see from afar his father's head borne off on a spear-point to be mocked at Wigmore. But the pursuit streamed away southward and westward through the streets of Tewkesbury, heaped with corpses of the panic-struck Welshmen whom the townsmen slaughtered without pity; and there was no attack as the little force fell back through the darkness and big thunder-drops in despair upon Kenilworth. "I may hang up my axe," are the bitter words which a poet attributes to their leader, "for feebly have I gone;" and once within the castle he gave way to a wild sorrow, day after day tasting neither meat nor drink.

Edward.

He was roused into action again by news of the shameful indignities which the Marcher-lords had offered to the body of the great Earl before whom they had trembled so long. The knights around him broke out at the tidings in a passionate burst of fury, and clamoured for the blood of Richard of Cornwall and his son, who were prisoners in the castle. But Simon had enough nobleness left to interpose. "To God and him alone was it owing" Richard owned afterwards "that I was snatched from death." The captives were not only saved, but set free. A Parliament had been called at Winchester at the opening of September, and its mere assembly promised an end to the reign of utter lawlessness. A powerful party, too, was known to exist in the royal camp which, hostile as it had shown itself to Earl Simon, shared his love for English liberties, and the liberation of Richard was sure to aid its efforts. At the

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head of this party stood the young Earl of Gloucester, Gilbert of Clare, to whose action above all the Earl's overthrow was due. And with Gilbert stood Edward himself. The passion for law, the instinct of good government, which were to make his reign so memorable in our history, had declared themselves from the first. He had sided with the barons at the outset of their struggle with Henry; he had striven to keep his father true to the Provisions of Oxford. It was only when the figure of Earl Simon seemed to tower above that of Henry himself, when the Crown seemed falling into bondage, that Edward passed to the royal side; and now that the danger which he dreaded was over he returned to his older attitude. In the first flush of victory, while the doom of Simon was as yet unknown, Edward had stood alone in desiring his captivity against the cry of the Marcher-lords for his blood. When all was done he wept over the corpse of his cousin and playfellow, Henry de Montfort, and followed the Earl's body to the tomb. But great as was Edward's position after the victory of Evesham, his moderate counsels were as yet of little avail. His efforts in fact were met by those of Henry's second son, Edmund, who had received the lands and earldom of Earl Simon, and whom the dread of any restoration of the house of De Montfort set at the head of the ultra-royalists. Nor was any hope of moderation to be found in the Parliament which met in September 1265. It met in the usual temper of a restoration-Parliament to legalize the outrages of the previous month. The prisoners who had been released from the dungeons of the barons poured into Winchester to add fresh violence to the demands of the Marchers. The wives of the captive loyalists and the widows of the slain were summoned to give fresh impulse to the reaction. Their place of meeting added fuel to the fiery passions of the throng, for Winchester was fresh from its pillage by the younger Simon on his way to Kenilworth, and its stubborn loyalty must have been fanned into a flame by the losses it had endured. In such

an assembly no voice of moderation could find a hearing. The four bishops who favoured the national cause, the bishops of London and Lincoln, of Worcester and Chichester, were excluded from it, and the heads of the religious houses were summoned for the mere purpose of extortion. Its measures were but a confirmation of the violence which had been wrought. All grants made during the King's "captivity" were revoked. The house of De Montfort was banished from the realm. The charter of London was annulled. The adherents of Earl Simon were disinherited and seizin of their lands was given to the King.

Simon's Miracles.

Henry at once appointed commissioners to survey and take possession of his spoil while he moved to Windsor to triumph in the humiliation of London. Its mayor and forty of its chief citizens waited in the castle yard only to be thrown into prison in spite of a safe-conduct, and Henry entered his capital in triumph as into an enemy's city. The surrender of Dover came to fill his cup of joy, for Richard and Amaury of Montfort had sailed with the Earl's treasure to enlist foreign mercenaries, and it was by this port that their force was destined to land. But a rising of the prisoners detained there compelled its surrender in October, and the success of the royalists seemed complete. In reality their difficulties were but beginning. Their triumph over Earl Simon had been a triumph over the religious sentiment of the time, and religion avenged itself in its own way. Everywhere the Earl's death was looked upon as a martyrdom; and monk and friar united in praying for the souls of the men who fell at Evesham as for soldiers of Christ. It was soon whispered that Heaven was attesting the sanctity of De Montfort by miracles at his tomb. How great was the effect of this belief was seen in the efforts of King and Pope to suppress the miracles, and in their continuance not only through the reign of Edward the First but even in the days of his successor. But its immediate result was a sudden revival

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of hope. "Sighs are changed into songs of praise," breaks out a monk of the time, "and the greatness of our former joy has come to life again!" Nor was it in miracles alone that the "faithful," as they proudly styled themselves, began to look for relief "from the oppression of the malignants." A monk of St. Alban's who was penning a eulogy of Earl Simon in the midst of this uproar saw the rise of a new spirit of resistance in the streets of the little town. In dread of war it was guarded and strongly closed with bolts and bars, and refused entrance to all strangers, and above all to horsemen, who wished to pass through. The Constable of Hertford, an old foe of the townsmen, boasted that spite of bolts and bars he would enter the place and carry off four of the best villeins captive. He contrived to make his way in; but as he loitered idly about a butcher who passed by heard him ask his men how the wind stood. The butcher guessed his design to burn the town, and felled him to the ground. The blow roused the townsmen. They secured the Constable and his followers, struck off their heads, and fixed them at the four corners of the borough.

The Younger Simon.

The popular reaction gave fresh heart to the younger Simon. Quitting Kenilworth, he joined in November John D'Eyvill and Baldewin Wake in the Isle of Axholme where the Disinherited were gathering in arms. So fast did horse and foot flow in to him that Edward himself hurried into Lincolnshire to meet this new danger. He saw that the old strife was just breaking out again. The garrison of Kenilworth scoured the country; the men of the Cinque Ports, putting wives and children on board their barks, swept the Channel and harried the coasts; while Llewelyn, who had brought about the dissolution of Parliament by a raid upon Chester, butchered the forces sent against him and was master of the border. The one thing needed to link the forces of resistance together was a head, and such a head the appearance of Simon at Axholme seemed to promise. But Edward was resolute

in his plan of conciliation. Arriving before the camp at the close of 1265, he at once entered into negotiations with his cousin, and prevailed on him to quit the island and appear before the King. Richard of Cornwall welcomed Simon at the court, he presented him to Henry as the saviour of his life, and on his promise to surrender Kenilworth Henry gave him the kiss of peace. In spite of the opposition of Roger Mortimer and the Marcher-lords success seemed to be crowning this bold stroke of the peace party when the Earl of Gloucester interposed. Desirous as he was of peace, the blood of De Montfort lay between him and the Earl's sons, and the safety of the one lay in the ruin of the other. In the face of this danger Earl Gilbert threw his weight into the scale of the ultra-royalists, and peace became impossible. The question of restitution was shelved by a reference to arbitrators; and Simon, detained in spite of a safe-conduct, moved in Henry's train at Christmas to witness the surrender of Kenilworth which had been stipulated as the price of his full reconciliation with the King. But hot blood was now stirred again on both sides. The garrison replied to the royal summons by a refusal to surrender. They had received ward of the castle, they said, not from Simon but from the Countess, and to none but her would they give it up. The refusal was not likely to make Simon's position an easier one. On his return to London the award of the arbitrators bound him to quit the realm and not to return save with the assent of King and baronage when all were at peace. He remained for a while in free custody at London; but warnings that he was doomed to life-long imprisonment drove him to flight, and he finally sought a refuge over sea.

Ban of Kenilworth.

His escape set England again on fire. Llewelyn wasted the border; the Cinque Ports held the sea; the garrison of Kenilworth pushed their raids as far as Oxford; Baldewin Wake with a band of the Disinherited threw himself into the woods and harried the eastern counties;

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Sir Adam Gurdon, a knight of gigantic size and renowned prowess, wasted with a smaller party the shires of the south. In almost every county bands of outlaws were seeking a livelihood in rapine and devastation, while the royal treasury stood empty and the enormous fine imposed upon London had been swept into the coffers of French usurers. But a stronger hand than the King's was now at the head of affairs, and Edward met his assailants with untiring energy. King Richard's son, Henry of Almaine, was sent with a large force to the north; Mortimer hurried to hold the Welsh border; Edmund was despatched to Warwick to hold Kenilworth in check while Edward himself marched at the opening of March to the south. The Berkshire woods were soon cleared, and at Whitsuntide Edward succeeded in dispersing Adam Gurdon's band and in capturing its renowned leader in single combat. The last blow was already given to the rising in the north, where Henry of Almaine surprized the Disinherited at Chesterfield and took their leader, the Earl of Derby, in his bed. Though Edmund had done little but hold the Kenilworth knights in check, the submission of the rest of the country now enabled the royal army to besiege it in force. But the King was penniless, and the Parliament which he called to replenish his treasury in August showed the resolve of the nation that the strife should cease. They would first establish peace, if peace were possible, they said, and then answer the King's demand. Twelve commissioners, with Earl Gilbert at their head, were appointed on Henry's assent to arrange terms of reconciliation. They at once decided that none should be utterly disinherited for their part in the troubles, but that liberty of redemption should be left open to all. Furious at the prospect of being forced to disgorge their spoil, Mortimer and the ultra-royalists broke out in mad threats of violence, even against the life of the Papal legate who had pressed for the reconciliation. But the power of the ultra-royalists was over. The general resolve was not to be shaken by

the clamour of a faction, and Mortimer's rout at Brecknock by Llewelyn, the one defeat that chequered the tide of success, had damaged that leader's influence. Backed by Edward and Earl Gilbert, the legate met their opposition with a threat of excommunication, and Mortimer withdrew sullenly from the camp. Fresh trouble in the country and the seizure of the Isle of Ely by a band of the Disinherited quickened the labours of the Twelve. At the close of September they pronounced their award, restoring their lands to all who made submission on a graduated scale of redemption, promising indemnity for all wrongs done during the troubles, and leaving the restoration of the house of De Montfort to the royal will. But to these provisions were added an emphatic demand that "the King fully keep and observe those liberties of the Church, charters of liberties, and forest charters, which he is expressly and by his own mouth bound to preserve and keep." "Let the King," they add, "establish on a lasting foundation those concessions which he has hitherto made of his own will and not on compulsion, and those needful ordinances which have been devised by his subjects and by his own good pleasure."

Close of the Struggle.

With this Award the struggle came to an end. The garrison of Kenilworth held out indeed till November, and the full benefit of the Ban was only secured when Earl Gilbert in the opening of the following year suddenly appeared in arms and occupied London. But the Earl was satisfied, the Disinherited were at last driven from Ely, and Llewelyn was brought to submission by the appearance of an army at Shrewsbury. All was over by the close of 1267. His father's age and weakness, his own brilliant military successes, left Edward practically in possession of the royal power; and his influence at once made itself felt. There was no attempt to return to the misrule of Henry's reign, to his projects of continental aggrandizement or internal despotism. The constitutional system of government for which the Barons had fought

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was finally adopted by the Crown, and the Parliament of Marlborough which assembled in November 1267 renewed the provisions by which the baronage had remedied the chief abuses of the time in their Provisions of Oxford and Westminster. The appointment of all officers of state indeed was jealously reserved to the crown. But the royal expenditure was brought within bounds. Taxation was only imposed with the assent of the Great Council. So utterly was the land at rest that Edward felt himself free to take the cross in 1268 and to join the Crusade which was being undertaken by St. Lewis of France. He reached Tunis only to find Lewis dead and his enterprize a failure, wintered in Sicily, made his way to Acre in the spring of 1271, and spent more than a year in exploits which want of force prevented from growing into a serious campaign. He was already on his way home when the death of Henry the Third in November 1272 called him to the throne.

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CHAPTER IV.

EDWARD THE FIRST.

1272—1307.

Edward's Temper.

In his own day and among his own subjects Edward the First was the object of an almost boundless admiration. He was in the truest sense a national King. At the moment when the last trace of foreign conquest passed away, when the descendants of those who won and those who lost at Senlac blended for ever into an English people, England saw in her ruler no stranger but an Englishman. The national tradition returned in more than the golden hair or the English name which linked him to our earlier Kings. Edward's very temper was English to the core. In good as in evil he stands out as the typical representative of the race he ruled, like them wilful and imperious, tenacious of his rights, indomitable in his pride, dogged, stubborn, slow of apprehension, narrow in sympathy, but like them, too, just in the main, unselfish, laborious, conscientious, haughtily observant of truth and self-respect, temperate, reverent of duty, religious. It is this oneness with the character of his people which parts the temper of Edward from what had till now been the temper of his house. He inherited indeed from the Angevins their fierce and passionate wrath; his punishments, when he punished in anger, were without pity; and a priest who ventured at a moment of storm into his presence with a remonstrance dropped dead from sheer fright at his feet. But his nature had nothing of the hard

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selfishness, the vindictive obstinacy which had so long characterized the house of Anjou. His wrath passed as quickly as it gathered; and for the most part his conduct was that of an impulsive, generous man, trustful, averse from cruelty, prone to forgive. "No man ever asked mercy of me," he said in his old age, "and was refused." The rough soldierly nobleness of his nature broke out in incidents like that at Falkirk where he lay on the bare ground among his men, or in his refusal during a Welsh campaign to drink of the one cask of wine which had been saved from marauders. "It is I who have brought you into this strait," he said to his thirsty fellow-soldiers, "and I will have no advantage of you in meat or drink." Beneath the stern imperiousness of his outer bearing lay in fact a strange tenderness and sensitiveness to affection. Every subject throughout his realm was drawn closer to the King who wept bitterly at the news of his father's death though it gave him a crown, whose fiercest burst of vengeance was called out by an insult to his mother, whose crosses rose as memorials of his love and sorrow at every spot where his wife's bier rested. "I loved her tenderly in her lifetime," wrote Edward to Eleanor's friend, the Abbot of Clugny; "I do not cease to love her now she is dead." And as it was with mother and wife, so it was with his people at large. All the self-concentrated isolation of the foreign Kings disappeared in Edward. He was the first English ruler since the Conquest who loved his people with a personal love and craved for their love back again. To his trust in them we owe our Parliament, to his care for them the great statutes which stand in the forefront of our laws. Even in his struggles with her England understood a temper which was so perfectly her own, and the quarrels between King and people during his reign are quarrels where, doggedly as they fought, neither disputant doubted for a moment the worth or affection of the other. Few scenes in our history are more touching than a scene during the long contest over the Charter, when Edward

stood face to face with his people in Westminster Hall and with a sudden burst of tears owned himself frankly in the wrong.

Influence of Chivalry.

But it was just this sensitiveness, this openness to outer impressions and outer influences, that led to the strange contradictions which meet us in Edward's career. His reign was a time in which a foreign influence told strongly on our manners, our literature, our national spirit, for the sudden rise of France into a compact and organized monarchy was now making its influence dominant in Western Europe. The "chivalry" so familiar to us in the pages of Froissart, that picturesque mimicry of high sentiment, of heroism, love, and courtesy before which all depth and reality of nobleness disappeared to make room for the coarsest profligacy, the narrowest caste-spirit, and a brutal indifference to human suffering, was specially of French creation. There was a nobleness in Edward's nature from which the baser influences of this chivalry fell away. His life was pure, his piety, save when it stooped to the superstition of the time, manly and sincere, while his high sense of duty saved him from the frivolous self-indulgence of his successors. But he was far from being wholly free from the taint of his age. His passionate desire was to be a model of the fashionable chivalry of his day. His frame was that of a born soldier —tall, deep-chested, long of limb, capable alike of endurance or action, and he shared to the full his people's love of venture and hard fighting. When he encountered Adam Gurdon after Evesham he forced him single-handed to beg for mercy. At the opening of his reign he saved his life by sheer fighting in a tournament at Chalon. It was this love of adventure which lent itself to the frivolous unreality of the new chivalry. His fame as a general seemed a small thing to Edward when compared with his fame as a knight. At his "Round Table of Kenilworth" a hundred lords and ladies, "clad all in silk," renewed the faded glories of Arthur's Court. The false air of romance which

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was soon to turn the gravest political resolutions into outbursts of sentimental feeling appeared in his "Vow of the Swan," when rising at the royal board he swore on the dish before him to avenge on Scotland the murder of Comyn. Chivalry exerted on him a yet more fatal influence in its narrowing of his sympathy to the noble class and in its exclusion of the peasant and the craftsman from all claim to pity. "Knight without reproach" as he was, he looked calmly on at the massacre of the burghers of Berwick, and saw in William Wallace nothing but a common robber.

Influence of Legality.

The French notion of chivalry had hardly more power over Edward's mind than the French conception of kingship, feudality, and law. The rise of a lawyer class was everywhere hardening customary into written rights, allegiance into subjection, loose ties such as commendation into a definite vassalage. But it was specially through French influence, the influence of St. Lewis and his successors, that the imperial theories of the Roman Law were brought to bear upon this natural tendency of the time. When the "sacred majesty" of the Cæsars was transferred by a legal fiction to the royal head of a feudal baronage every constitutional relation was changed. The "defiance" by which a vassal renounced service to his lord became treason, his after resistance "sacrilege." That Edward could appreciate what was sound and noble in the legal spirit around him was shown in his reforms of our judicature and our Parliament; but there was something as congenial to his mind in its definiteness, its rigidity, its narrow technicalities. He was never wilfully unjust, but he was too often captious in his justice, fond of legal chicanery, prompt to take advantage of the letter of the law. The high conception of royalty which he borrowed from St. Lewis united with this legal turn of mind in the worst acts of his reign. Of rights or liberties unregistered in charter or roll Edward would know nothing, while his own good sense was overpowered by the majesty of his

crown. It was incredible to him that Scotland should revolt against a legal bargain which made her national independence conditional on the terms extorted from a claimant of her throne; nor could he view in any other light but as treason the resistance of his own baronage to an arbitrary taxation which their fathers had borne.

His Moral Grandeur.

It is in the anomalies of such a character as this, in its strange mingling of justice and wrong-doing, of grandeur and littleness, that we must look for any fair explanation of much that has since been bitterly blamed in Edward's conduct and policy. But what none of these anomalies can hide from us is the height of moral temper which shows itself in the tenor of his rule. Edward was every inch a king; but his notion of kingship was a lofty and a noble one. He loved power; he believed in his sovereign rights and clung to them with a stubborn tenacity. But his main end in clinging to them was the welfare of his people. Nothing better proves the self-command which he drew from the purpose he set before him than his freedom from the common sin of great rulers—the lust of military glory. He was the first of our kings since William the Conqueror who combined military genius with political capacity; but of the warrior's temper, of the temper that finds delight in war, he had little or none. His freedom from it was the more remarkable that Edward was a great soldier. His strategy in the campaign before Evesham marked him as a consummate general. Earl Simon was forced to admire the skill of his advance on the fatal field, and the operations by which he met the risings that followed it were a model of rapidity and military grasp. In his Welsh campaigns he was soon to show a tenacity and force of will which wrested victory out of the midst of defeat. He could head a furious charge of horse as at Lewes, or organize a commissariat which enabled him to move army after army across the harried Lowlands. In his old age he was quick to discover the value of the English archery and to employ it as a means of victory

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at Falkirk. But master as he was of the art of war, and forced from time to time to show his mastery in great campaigns, in no single instance was he the assailant. He fought only when he was forced to fight; and when fighting was over he turned back quietly to the work of administration and the making of laws.

His Political Genius.

War in fact was with Edward simply a means of carrying out the ends of statesmanship, and it was in the character of his statesmanship that his real greatness made itself felt. His policy was an English policy; he was firm to retain what was left of the French dominion of his race, but he abandoned from the first all dreams of recovering the wider dominions which his grandfather had lost. His mind was not on that side of the Channel, but on this. He concentrated his energies on the consolidation and good government of England itself. We can only fairly judge the annexation of Wales or his attempt to annex Scotland if we look on his efforts in either quarter as parts of the same scheme of national administration to which we owe his final establishment of our judicature, our legislation, our parliament. The character of his action was no doubt determined in great part by the general mood of his age, an age whose special task and aim seemed to be that of reducing to distinct form the principles which had sprung into a new and vigorous life during the age which preceded it. As the opening of the thirteenth century had been an age of founders, creators, discoverers, so its close was an age of lawyers, of rulers such as St. Lewis of France or Alfonzo the Wise of Castille, organizers, administrators, framers of laws and institutions. It was to this class that Edward himself belonged. He had little of creative genius, of political originality, but he possessed in a high degree the passion for order and good government, the faculty of organization, and a love of law which broke out even in the legal chicanery to which he sometimes stooped. In the judicial reforms to which so much of his attention was directed he showed himself, if not an "English

Justinian," at any rate a clear-sighted and judicious man of business, developing, reforming, bringing into a shape which has borne the test of five centuries' experience the institutions of his predecessors. If the excellence of a statesman's work is to be measured by its duration and the faculty it has shown of adapting itself to the growth and developement of a nation, then the work of Edward rises to the highest standard of excellence. Our law courts preserve to this very day the form which he gave them. Mighty as has been the growth of our Parliament, it has grown on the lines which he laid down. The great roll of English Statutes reaches back in unbroken series to the Statutes of Edward. The routine of the first Henry, the administrative changes which had been imposed on the nation by the clear head and imperious will of the second, were transformed under Edward into a political organization with carefully-defined limits, directed not by the King's will alone but by the political impulse of the people at large. His social legislation was based in the same fashion on principles which had already been brought into practical working by Henry the Second. It was no doubt in great measure owing to this practical sense of its financial and administrative value rather than to any foresight of its political importance that we owe Edward's organization of our Parliament. But if the institutions which we commonly associate with his name owe their origin to others, they owe their form and their perpetuity to him.

Constitutional Aspect of his Reign.

The King's English policy, like his English name, was in fact the sign of a new epoch. England was made. The long period of national formation had come practically to an end. With the reign of Edward begins the constitutional England in which we live. It is not that any chasm separates our history before it from our history after it as the chasm of the Revolution divides the history of France, for we have traced the rudiments of our constitution to the first moment of the English settlement in Britain. But it is with these as with our language. The

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tongue of Ælfred is the very tongue we speak, but in spite of its identity with modern English it has to be learned like the tongue of a stranger. On the other hand, the English of Chaucer is almost as intelligible as our own. In the first the historian and philologer can study the origin and developement of our national speech, in the last a schoolboy can enjoy the story of Troilus and Cressida or listen to the gay chat of the Canterbury Pilgrims. In precisely the same way a knowledge of our earliest laws is indispensable for the right understanding of later legislation, its origin and its developement, while the principles of our Parliamentary system must necessarily be studied in the Meetings of Wise Men before the Conquest or the Great Council of barons after it. But the Parliaments which Edward gathered at the close of his reign are not merely illustrative of the history of later Parliaments, they are absolutely identical with those which still sit at St. Stephen's. At the close of his reign King, Lords, Commons, the Courts of Justice, the forms of public administration, the relations of Church and State, all local divisions and provincial jurisdictions, in great measure the framework of society itself, have taken the shape which they essentially retain. In a word the long struggle of the constitution for actual existence has come to an end. The contests which follow are not contests that tell, like those that preceded them, on the actual fabric of our institutions; they are simply stages in the rough discipline by which England has learned and is still learning how best to use and how wisely to develope the latent powers of its national life, how to adjust the balance of its social and political forces, how to adapt its constitutional forms to the varying conditions of the time.

The Earlier Finance.

The news of his father's death found Edward at Capua in the opening of 1273; but the quiet of his realm under a regency of which Roger Mortimer was the practical head left him free to move slowly homewards. Two of his acts while thus journeying through Italy show that his

mind was already dwelling on the state of English finance and of English law. His visit to the Pope at Orvieto was with a view of gaining permission to levy from the clergy a tenth of their income for the three coming years, while he drew from Bologna its most eminent jurist, Francesco Accursi, to aid in the task of legal reform. At Paris he did homage to Philip the Third for his French possessions, and then turning southward he devoted a year to the ordering of Gascony. It was not till the summer of 1274 that the King reached England. But he had already planned the work he had to do, and the measures which he laid before the Parliament of 1275 were signs of the spirit in which he was to set about it. The First Statute of Westminster was rather a code than a statute. It contained no less than fifty-one clauses, and was an attempt to summarize a number of previous enactments contained in the Great Charter, the Provisions of Oxford, and the Statute of Marlborough, as well as to embody some of the administrative measures of Henry the Second and his son. But a more pressing need than that of a codification of the law was the need of a reorganization of finance. While the necessities of the Crown were growing with the widening of its range of administrative action, the revenues of the Crown admitted of no corresponding expansion. In the earliest times of our history the outgoings of the Crown were as small as its income. All local expenses, whether for justice or road-making or fortress-building, were paid by local funds; and the national "fyrd" served at its own cost in the field. The produce of a king's private estates with the provisions due to him from the public lands scattered over each county, whether gathered by the King himself as he moved over his realm, or as in later days fixed at a stated rate and collected by his sheriff, were sufficient to defray the mere expenses of the Court. The Danish wars gave the first shock to this simple system. To raise a ransom which freed the land from the invader, the first land-

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tax, under the name of the Danegeld, was laid on every hide of ground; and to this national taxation the Norman kings added the feudal burthens of the new military estates created by the Conquest, reliefs paid on inheritance, profits of marriages and wardship, and the three feudal aids. But foreign warfare soon exhausted these means of revenue; the barons and bishops in their Great Council were called on at each emergency for a grant from their lands, and at each grant a corresponding demand was made by the King as a landlord on the towns, as lying for the most part in the royal demesne. The cessation of Danegeld under Henry the Second and his levy of scutage made little change in the general incidence of taxation: it still fell wholly on the land, for even the townsmen paid as holders of their tenements. But a new principle of taxation was disclosed in the tithe levied for a Crusade at the close of Henry's reign. Land was no longer the only source of wealth. The growth of national prosperity, of trade and commerce, was creating a mass of personal property which offered irresistible temptations to the Angevin financiers. The old revenue from landed property was restricted and lessened by usage and compositions. Scutage was only due for foreign campaigns: the feudal aids only on rare and stated occasions: and though the fines from the shire-courts grew with the growth of society the dues from the public lands were fixed and incapable of developement. But no usage fettered the Crown in dealing with personal property, and its growth in value promised a growing revenue. From the close of Henry the Second's reign therefore this became the most common form of taxation. Grants of from a seventh to a thirtieth of moveables, household-property, and stock were demanded; and it was the necessity of procuring their assent to these demands which enabled the baronage through the reign of Henry the Third to bring a financial pressure to bear on the Crown.

Indirect Taxation.

But in addition to these two forms of direct taxation indirect taxation also was coming more and more to the

front. The right of the King to grant licences to bring goods into or to trade within the realm, a right springing from the need for his protection felt by the strangers who came there for purposes of traffic, laid the foundation of our taxes on imports. Those on exports were only a part of the general system of taxing personal property which we have already noticed. How tempting this source of revenue was proving we see from a provision of the Great Charter which forbids the levy of more than the ancient customs on merchants entering or leaving the realm. Commerce was in fact growing with the growing wealth of the people. The crowd of civil and ecclesiastical buildings which date from this period shows the prosperity of the country. Christian architecture reached its highest beauty in the opening of Edward's reign; a reign marked by the completion of the abbey church of Westminster and of the cathedral church at Salisbury. An English noble was proud to be styled "an incomparable builder," while some traces of the art which was rising into life across the Alps flowed in, it may be, with the Italian ecclesiastics whom the Papacy forced on the English Church. The shrine of the Confessor at Westminster, the mosaic pavement beside the altar of the abbey, the paintings on the walls of its chapter-house remind us of the schools which were springing up under Giotto and the Pisans. But the wealth which this art progress shows drew trade to English shores. England was as yet simply an agricultural country. Gascony sent her wines; her linens were furnished by the looms of Ghent and Liége; Genoese vessels brought to her fairs the silks, the velvets, the glass of Italy. In the barks of the Hanse merchants came fur and amber from the Baltic, herrings, pitch, timber, and naval stores from the countries of the north. Spain sent us iron and war-horses. Milan sent armour. The great Venetian merchant-galleys touched the southern coasts and left in our ports the dates of Egypt, the figs and currants

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of Greece, the silk of Sicily, the sugar of Cyprus and Crete, the spices of the Eastern seas. Capital too came from abroad. The bankers of Florence and Lucca were busy with loans to the court or vast contracts with the wool-growers. The bankers of Cahors had already dealt a death-blow to the usury of the Jew. Against all this England had few exports to set. The lead supplied by the mines of Derbyshire, the salt of the Worcestershire springs, the iron of the Weald, were almost wholly consumed at home. The one metal export of any worth was that of tin from the tin-mines of Cornwall. But the production of wool was fast becoming a main element of the nation's wealth. Flanders, the great manufacturing country of the time, lay fronting our eastern coast; and with this market close at hand the pastures of England found more and more profit in the supply of wool. The Cistercian order which possessed vast ranges of moorland in Yorkshire became famous as wool-growers; and their wool had been seized for Richard's ransom. The Florentine merchants were developing this trade by their immense contracts; we find a single company of merchants contracting for the purchase of the Cistercian wool throughout the year. It was after counsel with the Italian bankers that Edward devised his scheme for drawing a permanent revenue from this source. In the Parliament of 1275 he obtained the grant of half a mark, or six shillings and eightpence, on each sack of wool exported; and this grant, a grant memorable as forming the first legal foundation of our customs-revenue, at once relieved the necessities of the Crown.

Welsh Campaign.

The grant of the wool tax enabled Edward in fact to deal with the great difficulty of his realm. The troubles of the Barons' war, the need which Earl Simon felt of Llewelyn's alliance to hold in check the Marcher-barons, had all but shaken off from Wales the last traces of dependence. Even at the close of the war the threat of an attack from the now united kingdom only forced Llewelyn to submis-

sion on a practical acknowledgement of his sovereignty. Although the title which Llewelyn ap Jorwerth claimed of Prince of North Wales was recognized by the English court in the earlier days of Henry the Third, it was withdrawn after 1229 and its claimant known only as Prince of Aberffraw. But the loftier title of Prince of Wales which Llewelyn ap Gryffydd assumed in 1256 was formally conceded to him in 1267, and his right to receive homage from the other nobles of his principality was formally sanctioned. Near however as he seemed to the final realization of his aims, Llewelyn was still a vassal of the English crown, and the accession of Edward to the throne was at once followed by the demand of homage. But the summons was fruitless; and the next two years were wasted in as fruitless negotiation. The kingdom however was now well in hand. The royal treasury was filled again, and in 1277 Edward marched on North Wales. The fabric of Welsh greatness fell at a single blow. The chieftains who had so lately sworn fealty to Llewelyn in the southern and central parts of the country deserted him to join his English enemies in their attack; an English fleet reduced Anglesea; and the Prince was cooped up in his mountain fastnesses and forced to throw himself on Edward's mercy. With characteristic moderation the conqueror contented himself with adding to the English dominions the coast-district as far as Conway and with providing that the title of Prince of Wales should cease at Llewelyn's death. A heavy fine which he had incurred by his refusal to do homage was remitted; and Eleanor, a daughter of Earl Simon of Montfort whom he had sought as his wife but who had been arrested on her way to him, was wedded to the Prince at Edward's court.

Judicial Reforms

For four years all was quiet across the Welsh Marches, and Edward was able again to turn his attention to the work of internal reconstruction. It is probably to this time, certainly to the earlier years of his reign, that we may attribute his modification of our judicial system.

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The King's Court was divided into three distinct tribunals, the Court of Exchequer which took cognizance of all causes in which the royal revenue was concerned; the Court of Common Pleas for suits between private persons; and the King's Bench, which had jurisdiction in all matters that affected the sovereign as well as in "pleas of the crown" or criminal causes expressly reserved for his decision. Each court was now provided with a distinct staff of judges. Of yet greater importance than this change, which was in effect but the completion of a process of severance that had long been going on, was the establishment of an equitable jurisdiction side by side with that of the common law. In his reform of 1178 Henry the Second broke up the older King's Court, which had till then served as the final Court of Appeal, by the severance of the purely legal judges who had been gradually added to it from the general body of his councillors. The judges thus severed from the Council retained the name and the ordinary jurisdiction of "the King's Court," but the mere fact of their severance changed in an essential way the character of the justice they dispensed. The King in Council wielded a power which was not only judicial but executive; his decisions though based upon custom were not fettered by it, they were the expressions of his will, and it was as his will that they were carried out by officers of the Crown. But the separate bench of judges had no longer this unlimited power at their command. They had not the King's right as representative of the community to make the law for the redress of a wrong. They professed simply to declare what the existing law was, even if it was insufficient for the full purpose of redress. The authority of their decision rested mainly on their adhesion to ancient custom or as it was styled the "common law" which had grown up in the past. They could enforce their decisions only by directions to an independent officer, the sheriff, and here again their right was soon rigidly bounded by set form and custom. These bonds in fact became tighter

every day, for their decisions were now beginning to be reported, and the cases decided by one bench of judges became authorities for their successors. It is plain that such a state of things has the utmost value in many ways, whether in creating in men's minds that impersonal notion of a sovereign law which exercizes its imaginative force on human action, or in furnishing by the accumulation and sacredness of precedents a barrier against the invasion of arbitrary power. But it threw a terrible obstacle in the way of the actual redress of wrong. The increasing complexity of human action as civilization advanced outstripped the efforts of the law. Sometimes ancient custom furnished no redress for a wrong which sprang from modern circumstances. Sometimes the very pedantry and inflexibility of the law itself became in individual cases the highest injustice.

Equitable Jurisdiction.

It was the consciousness of this that made men cling even from the first moment of the independent existence of these courts to the judicial power which still remained inherent in the Crown itself. If his courts fell short in any matter the duty of the King to do justice to all still remained, and it was this obligation which was recognized in the provision of Henry the Second by which all cases in which his judges failed to do justice were reserved for the special cognizance of the royal Council itself. To this final jurisdiction of the King in Council Edward gave a wide developement. His assembly of the ministers, the higher permanent officials, and the law officers of the Crown for the first time reserved to itself in its judicial capacity the correction of all breaches of the law which the lower courts had failed to repress, whether from weakness, partiality, or corruption, and especially of those lawless outbreaks of the more powerful baronage which defied the common authority of the judges. Such powers were of course capable of terrible abuse, and it shows what real need there was felt to be for their exercize that though regarded with jealousy by Parliament the jurisdiction of

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the royal Council appears to have been steadily put into force through the two centuries which followed. In the reign of Henry the Seventh it took legal and statutory form in the shape of the Court of Star Chamber, and its powers are still exercized in our own day by the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council. But the same duty of the Crown to do justice where its courts fell short of giving due redress for wrong expressed itself in the jurisdiction of the Chancellor. This great officer of State, who had perhaps originally acted only as President of the Council when discharging its judicial functions, acquired at a very early date an independent judicial position of the same nature. It is by remembering this origin of the Court of Chancery that we understand the nature of the powers it gradually acquired. All grievances of the subject, especially those which sprang from the misconduct of government officials or of powerful oppressors, fell within its cognizance as they fell within that of the Royal Council, and to these were added disputes respecting the wardship of infants, dower, rent-charges, or tithes. Its equitable jurisdiction sprang from the defective nature and the technical and unbending rules of the common law. As the Council had given redress in cases where law became injustice, so the Court of Chancery interfered without regard to the rules of procedure adopted by the common law courts on the petition of a party for whose grievance the common law provided no adequate remedy. An analogous extension of his powers enabled the Chancellor to afford relief in cases of fraud, accident, or abuse of trust, and this side of his jurisdiction was largely extended at a later time by the results of legislation on the tenure of land by ecclesiastical bodies. The separate powers of the Chancellor, whatever was the original date at which they were first exercized, seem to have been thoroughly established under Edward the First.

Law and the Baronage.

What reconciled the nation to the exercize of powers such as these by the Crown and its council was the need which was

still to exist for centuries of an effective means of bringing the baronage within the reach of the law. Constitutionally the position of the English nobles had now become established. A King could no longer make laws or levy taxes or even make war without their assent. The nation reposed in them an unwavering trust, for they were no longer the brutal foreigners from whose violence the strong hand of a Norman ruler had been needed to protect his subjects; they were as English as the peasant or the trader. They had won English liberty by their swords, and the tradition of their order bound them to look on themselves as its natural guardians. The close of the Barons' War solved the problem which had so long troubled the realm, the problem how to ensure the government of the realm in accordance with the provisions of the Great Charter, by the transfer of the business of administration into the hands of a standing committee of the greater barons and prelates, acting as chief officers of state in conjunction with specially appointed ministers of the Crown. The body thus composed was known as the Continual Council; and the quiet government of the kingdom by this body in the long interval between the death of Henry the Third and his son's return shows how effective this rule of the nobles was. It is significant of the new relation which they were to strive to establish between themselves and the Crown that in the brief which announced Edward's accession the Council asserted that the new monarch mounted his throne "by the will of the peers." But while the political influence of the baronage as a leading element in the whole nation thus steadily mounted, the personal and purely feudal power of each individual baron on his own estates as steadily fell. The hold which the Crown gained on every noble family by its rights of wardship and marriage, the circuits of the royal judges, the ever narrowing bounds within which baronial justice saw itself circumscribed, the blow dealt by scutage at their military power, the prompt intervention of the Council in their feuds,

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lowered the nobles more and more to the common level of their fellow subjects. Much yet remained to be done; for within the general body of the baronage there existed side by side with the nobles whose aims were purely national nobles who saw in the overthrow of the royal despotism simply a chance of setting up again their feudal privileges; and different as the English baronage, taken as a whole, was from a feudal *noblesse* like that of Germany or France there is in every military class a natural drift towards violence and lawlessness. Throughout Edward's reign his strong hand was needed to enforce order on warring nobles. Great earls, such as those of Gloucester and Hereford, carried on private war; in Shropshire the Earl of Arundel waged his feud with Fulk Fitz Warine. To the lesser and poorer nobles the wealth of the trader, the long wain of goods as it passed along the highway, remained a tempting prey. Once, under cover of a mock tournament of monks against canons, a band of country gentlemen succeeded in introducing themselves into the great merchant fair at Boston; at nightfall every booth was on fire, the merchants robbed and slaughtered, and the booty carried off to ships which lay ready at the quay. Streams of gold and silver, ran the tale of popular horror, flowed melted down the gutters to the sea; "all the money in England could hardly make good the loss." Even at the close of Edward's reign lawless bands of "trail-bastons," or club-men, maintained themselves by general outrage, aided the country nobles in their feuds, and wrested money and goods from the great tradesmen.

Edward and the Baronage.

The King was strong enough to face and imprison the warring earls, to hang the chiefs of the Boston marauders, and to suppress the outlaws by rigorous commissions. But the repression of baronial outrage was only a part of Edward's policy in relation to the Baronage. Here, as elsewhere he had to carry out the political policy of his house, a policy defined by the great measures of Henry the Second, his institution of scutage, his general assize of

arms, his extension of the itinerant judicature of the royal judges. Forced by the first to an exact discharge of their military duties to the Crown, set by the second in the midst of a people trained equally with the nobles to arms, their judicial tyranny curbed and subjected to the King's justice by the third, the barons had been forced from their old standpoint of an isolated class to the new and nobler position of a people's leaders. Edward watched jealously over the ground which the Crown had gained. Immediately after his landing he appointed a commission of enquiry into the judicial franchises then existing, and on its report (of which the existing "Hundred-Rolls" are the result) itinerant justices were sent in 1278 to discover by what right these franchises were held. The writs of "quo warranto" were roughly met here and there. Earl Warenne bared a rusty sword and flung it on the justices' table. "This, sirs," he said, "is my warrant. By the sword our fathers won their lands when they came over with the Conqueror, and by the sword we will keep them." But the King was far from limiting himself to the mere carrying out of the plans of Henry the Second. Henry had aimed simply at lowering the power of the great feudatories; Edward aimed rather at neutralizing their power by raising the whole body of landowners to the same level. We shall see at a later time the measures which were the issues of this policy, but in the very opening of his reign a significant step pointed to the King's drift. In the summer of 1278 a royal writ ordered all freeholders who held lands to the value of twenty pounds to receive knighthood at the King's hands.

Edward and the Church.

Acts as significant announced Edward's purpose of carrying out another side of Henry's policy, that of limiting in the same way the independent jurisdiction of the Church. He was resolute to force it to become thoroughly national by bearing its due part of the common national burthens, and to break its growing dependence upon Rome. But the ecclesiastical body was jealous of its position as a power

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distinct from the power of the Crown, and Edward's policy had hardly declared itself when in 1279 Archbishop Peckham obtained a canon from the clergy by which copies of the Great Charter, with its provisions in favour of the liberties of the Church, were to be affixed to the doors of churches. The step was meant as a defiant protest against all interference, and it was promptly forbidden. An order issued by the Primate to the clergy to declare to their flocks the sentences of excommunication directed against all who obtained royal writs to obstruct suits in church courts, or who, whether royal officers or no, neglected to enforce their sentences, was answered in a yet more emphatic way. By falling into the "dead hand" or "mortmain" of the Church land ceased to render its feudal services; and in 1279 the Statute "de Religiosis," or as it is commonly called "of Mortmain," forbade any further alienation of land to religious bodies in such wise that it should cease to render its due service to the King. The restriction was probably no beneficial one to the country at large, for Churchmen were the best landlords, and it was soon evaded by the ingenuity of the clerical lawyers; but it marked the growing jealousy of any attempt to set aside what was national from serving the general need and profit of the nation. Its immediate effect was to stir the clergy to a bitter resentment. But Edward remained firm, and when the bishops proposed to restrict the royal courts from dealing with cases of patronage or causes which touched the chattels of Churchmen he met their proposals by an instant prohibition.

Conquest of Wales.

The resentment of the clergy had soon the means of showing itself during a new struggle with Wales. The persuasions of his brother David, who had deserted him in the previous war but who deemed his desertion insufficiently rewarded by an English lordship, roused Llewelyn to a fresh revolt. A prophecy of Merlin was said to promise that when English money became round a Prince of Wales should be crowned in London; and at this moment a new

coinage of copper money, coupled with a prohibition to break the silver penny into halves and quarters, as had been commonly done, was supposed to fulfil the prediction. In 1282 Edward marched in overpowering strength into the heart of Wales. But Llewelyn held out in Snowdon with the stubbornness of despair, and the rout of an English force which had crossed into Anglesea prolonged the contest into the winter. The cost of the war fell on the King's treasury. Edward had called for but one general grant through the past eight years of his reign; but he was now forced to appeal to his people, and by an expedient hitherto without precedent two provincial Councils were called for this purpose. That for Southern England met at Northampton, that for Northern at York; and clergy and laity were summoned, though in separate session, to both. Two knights came from every shire, two burgesses from every borough, while the bishops brought their archdeacons, abbots, and the proctors of their cathedral clergy. The grant of the laity was quick and liberal. But both at York and Northampton the clergy showed their grudge at Edward's measures by long delays in supplying his treasury. Pinched however as were his resources and terrible as were the sufferings of his army through the winter Edward's firmness remained unbroken; and rejecting all suggestions of retreat he issued orders for the formation of a new army at Caermarthen to complete the circle of investment round Llewelyn. But the war came suddenly to an end. The Prince sallied from his mountain hold for a raid upon Radnorshire and fell in a petty skirmish on the banks of the Wye. With him died the independence of his race. After six months of flight his brother David was made prisoner; and a Parliament summoned at Shrewsbury in the autumn of 1283, to which each county again sent its two knights and twenty boroughs their two burgesses, sentenced him to a traitor's death. The submission of the lesser chieftains soon followed: and the country was secured by the building of strong castles at Conway and Caernarvon, and the

settlement of English barons on the confiscated soil. The Statute of Wales which Edward promulgated at Rhuddlan in 1284 proposed to introduce English law and the English administration of justice and government into Wales. But little came of the attempt; and it was not till the time of Henry the Eighth that the country was actually incorporated with England and represented in the English Parliament. What Edward had really done was to break the Welsh resistance. The policy with which he followed up his victory (for the "massacre of the bards" is a mere fable) accomplished its end, and though two later rebellions and a ceaseless strife of the natives with the English towns in their midst showed that the country was still far from being reconciled to its conquest, it ceased to be any serious danger to England for a hundred years.

New Legislation.

From the work of conquest Edward again turned to the work of legislation. In the midst of his struggle with Wales he had shown his care for the commercial classes by a Statute of Merchants in 1283, which provided for the registration of the debts of traders and for their recovery by distraint of the debtor's goods and the imprisonment of his person. The close of the war saw two measures of even greater importance. The second Statute of Westminster which appeared in 1285 is a code of the same sort as the first, amending the Statutes of Mortmain, of Merton, and of Gloucester as well as the laws of dower and advowson, remodelling the system of justices of assize, and curbing the abuses of manorial jurisdiction. In the same year appeared the greatest of Edward's measures for the enforcement of public order The Statute of Winchester revived and reorganized the old institutions of national police and national defence. It regulated the action of the hundred, the duty of watch and ward, and the gathering of the fyrd or militia of the realm as Henry the Second had moulded it into form in his Assize of Arms. Every man was bound to hold himself in readiness, duly armed, for the King's service in case of invasion or revolt,

and to pursue felons when hue and cry were made after them. Every district was held responsible for crimes committed within its bounds; the gates of each town were to be shut at nightfall; and all strangers were required to give an account of themselves to the magistrates of any borough which they entered. By a provision which illustrates at once the social and physical condition of the country at the time all brushwood was ordered to be destroyed within a space of two hundred feet on either side of the public highway as a security for travellers against sudden attacks from robbers. To enforce the observance of this act knights were appointed in every shire under the name of Conservators of the Peace, a name which as the benefit of these local magistrates was more sensibly felt and their powers were more largely extended was changed into that which they still retain of Justices of the Peace. So orderly however was the realm that Edward was able in 1286 to pass over sea to his foreign dominions, and to spend the next three years in reforming their government. But the want of his guiding hand was at last felt; and the Parliament of 1289 refused a new tax till the King came home again.

"*Quia Emptores.*"

He returned to find the Earls of Gloucester and Hereford at war, and his judges charged with violence and corruption. The two Earls were brought to peace, and Earl Gilbert allied closely to the royal house by a marriage with the King's daughter Johanna. After a careful investigation the judicial abuses were recognized and amended. Two of the chief justices were banished from the realm and their colleagues imprisoned and fined. But these administrative measures were only preludes to a great legislative act which appeared in 1290. The Third Statute of Westminster, or, to use the name by which it is more commonly known, the Statute "Quia Emptores," is one of those legislative efforts which mark the progress of a wide social revolution in the country at large. The number of the greater barons was diminishing every day,

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while the number of the country gentry and of the more substantial yeomanry was increasing with the increase of the national wealth. The increase showed itself in a growing desire to become proprietors of land. Tenants of the barons received under-tenants on condition of their rendering them similar services to those which they themselves rendered to their lords; and the baronage, while duly receiving the services in compensation for which they had originally granted their lands in fee, saw with jealousy the feudal profits of these new under-tenants, the profits of wardships or of reliefs and the like, in a word the whole increase in the value of the estate consequent on its subdivision and higher cultivation passing into other hands than their own. The purpose of the statute "Quia Emptores" was to check this process by providing that in any case of alienation the sub-tenant should henceforth hold, not of the tenant, but directly of the superior lord. But its result was to promote instead of hindering the transfer and subdivision of land. The tenant who was compelled before the passing of the statute to retain in any case so much of the estate as enabled him to discharge his feudal services to the over-lord of whom he held it, was now enabled by a process analogous to the modern sale of "tenant-right," to transfer both land and services to new holders. However small the estates thus created might be, the bulk were held directly of the Crown; and this class of lesser gentry and freeholders grew steadily from this time in numbers and importance.

The Crown and the Jews.

The year which saw "Quia Emptores" saw a step which remains the great blot upon Edward's reign. The work abroad had exhausted the royal treasury, and he bought a grant from his Parliament by listening to their wishes in the matter of the Jews. Jewish traders had followed William the Conqueror from Normandy, and had been enabled by his protection to establish themselves in separate quarters or "Jewries" in all larger English towns. The Jew had no right or citizenship in the land. The

Jewry in which he lived was exempt from the common law. He was simply the King's chattel, and his life and goods were at the King's mercy. But he was too valuable a possession to be lightly thrown away. If the Jewish merchant had no standing-ground in the local court the king enabled him to sue before a special justiciar; his bonds were deposited for safety in a chamber of the royal palace at Westminster; he was protected against the popular hatred in the free exercize of his religion and allowed to build synagogues and to manage his own ecclesiastical affairs by means of a chief rabbi. The royal protection was dictated by no spirit of tolerance or mercy. To the kings the Jew was a mere engine of finance. The wealth which he accumulated was wrung from him whenever the crown had need, and torture and imprisonment were resorted to when milder means failed. It was the gold of the Jew that filled the royal treasury at the outbreak of war or of revolt. It was in the Hebrew coffers that the foreign kings found strength to hold their baronage at bay.

Popular Hatred of the Jews.

That the presence of the Jew was, at least in the earlier years of his settlement, beneficial to the nation at large there can be little doubt. His arrival was the arrival of a capitalist; and heavy as was the usury he necessarily exacted in the general insecurity of the time his loans gave an impulse to industry. The century which followed the Conquest witnessed an outburst of architectural energy which covered the land with castles and cathedrals; but castle and cathedral alike owed their erection to the loans of the Jew. His own example gave a new vigour to domestic architecture. The buildings which, as at Lincoln and Bury St. Edmund's, still retain their name of "Jews' Houses" were almost the first houses of stone which superseded the mere hovels of the English burghers. Nor was their influence simply industrial. Through their connexion with the Jewish schools in Spain and the East they opened a way for the revival of physical sciences. A

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Jewish medical school seems to have existed at Oxford; Roger Bacon himself studied under English rabbis. But the general progress of civilization now drew little help from the Jew, while the coming of the Cahorsine and Italian bankers drove him from the field of commercial finance. He fell back on the petty usury of loans to the poor, a trade necessarily accompanied with much of extortion and which roused into fiercer life the religious hatred against their race. Wild stories floated about of children carried off to be circumcized or crucified, and a Lincoln boy who was found slain in a Jewish house was canonized by popular reverence as "St. Hugh." The first work of the Friars was to settle in the Jewish quarters and attempt their conversion, but the popular fury rose too fast for these gentler means of reconciliation. When the Franciscans saved seventy Jews from hanging by their prayer to Henry the Third the populace angrily refused the brethren alms.

The Jewish Defiance.

But all this growing hate was met with a bold defiance. The picture which is commonly drawn of the Jew as timid, silent, crouching under oppression, however truly it may represent the general position of his race throughout mediæval Europe, is far from being borne out by historical fact on this side the Channel. In England the attitude of the Jew, almost to the very end, was an attitude of proud and even insolent defiance. He knew that the royal policy exempted him from the common taxation, the common justice, the common obligations of Englishmen. Usurer, extortioner as the realm held him to be, the royal justice would secure him the repayment of his bonds. A royal commission visited with heavy penalties any outbreak of violence against the King's "chattels." The Red King actually forbade the conversion of a Jew to the Christian faith; it was a poor exchange, he said, that would rid him of a valuable property and give him only a subject. We see in such a case as that of Oxford the insolence that grew out of this

consciousness of the royal protection. Here as elsewhere the Jewry was a town within a town, with its own language, its own religion and law, its peculiar commerce, its peculiar dress. No city bailiff could penetrate into the square of little alleys which lay behind the present Town Hall; the Church itself was powerless to prevent a synagogue from rising in haughty rivalry over against the cloister of St. Frideswide. Prior Philip of St. Frideswide complains bitterly of a certain Hebrew who stood at his door as the procession of the saint passed by, mocking at the miracles which were said to be wrought at her shrine. Halting and then walking firmly on his feet, showing his hands clenched as if with palsy and then flinging open his fingers, the Jew claimed gifts and oblations from the crowd that flocked to St. Frideswide's shrine on the ground that such recoveries of life and limb were quite as real as any that Frideswide ever wrought. Sickness and death in the prior's story avenge the saint on her blasphemer, but no earthly power, ecclesiastical or civil, seems to have ventured to deal with him. A more daring act of fanaticism showed the temper of the Jews even at the close of Henry the Third's reign. As the usual procession of scholars and citizens returned from St. Frideswide's on the Ascension Day of 1268 a Jew suddenly burst from a group of his comrades in front of the synagogue, and wrenching the crucifix from its bearer trod it under foot. But even in presence of such an outrage as this the terror of the Crown sheltered the Oxford Jews from any burst of popular vengeance. The sentence of the King condemned them to set up a cross of marble on the spot where the crime was committed, but even this sentence was in part remitted, and a less offensive place was found for the cross in an open plot by Merton College.

Expulsion of the Jews.

Up to Edward's day indeed the royal protection had never wavered. Henry the Second granted the Jews a right of burial outside every city where they dwelt. Richard punished heavily a massacre of the Jews at York,

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and organized a mixed court of Jews and Christians for the registration of their contracts. John suffered none to plunder them save himself, though he once wrested from them a sum equal to a year's revenue of his realm. The troubles of the next reign brought in a harvest greater than even the royal greed could reap; the Jews grew wealthy enough to acquire estates; and only a burst of popular feeling prevented a legal decision which would have enabled them to own freeholds. But the sack of Jewry after Jewry showed the popular hatred during the Barons' war, and at its close fell on the Jews the more terrible persecution of the law. To the cry against usury and the religious fanaticism which threatened them was now added the jealousy with which the nation that had grown up round the Charter regarded all exceptional jurisdictions or exemptions from the common law and the common burthens of the realm. As Edward looked on the privileges of the Church or the baronage, so his people looked on the privileges of the Jews. The growing weight of the Parliament told against them. Statute after statute hemmed them in. They were forbidden to hold real property, to employ Christian servants, to move through the streets without the two white tablets of wool on their breasts which distinguished their race. They were prohibited from building new synagogues or eating with Christians or acting as physicians to them. Their trade, already crippled by the rivalry of the bankers of Cahors, was annihilated by a royal order which bade them renounce usury under pain of death. At last persecution could do no more, and Edward, eager at the moment to find supplies for his treasury and himself swayed by the fanaticism of his subjects, bought the grant of a fifteenth from clergy and laity by consenting to drive the Jews from his realm. No share of the enormities which accompanied this expulsion can fall upon the King, for he not only suffered the fugitives to take their personal wealth with them but punished with the halter those who plundered them at

sea. But the expulsion was none the less cruel. Of the sixteen thousand who preferred exile to apostasy few reached the shores of France. Many were wrecked, others robbed and flung overboard. One ship-master turned out a crew of wealthy merchants on to a sandbank and bade them call a new Moses to save them from the sea.

Scotland.

From the expulsion of the Jews, as from his nobler schemes of legal and administrative reforms, Edward was suddenly called away to face complex questions which awaited him in the North. At the moment which we have reached the kingdom of the Scots was still an aggregate of four distinct countries, each with its different people, its different tongue, its different history. The old Pictish kingdom across the Firth of Forth, the original Scot kingdom in Argyle, the district of Cumbria or Strathclyde, and the Lowlands which stretched from the Firth of Forth to the English border, had become united under the Kings of the Scots; Pictland by inheritance, Cumbria by a grant from the English King Eadmund, the Lowlands by conquest, confirmed as English tradition alleged by a grant from Cnut. The shadowy claim of dependence on the English Crown which dated from the days when a Scotch King "commended" himself and his people to Ælfred's son Eadward, a claim strengthened by the grant of Cumbria to Malcolm as a "fellow worker" of the English sovereign "by sea and land," may have been made more real through this last convention. But whatever change the acquisition of the Lowlands made in the relation of the Scot Kings to the English sovereigns, it certainly affected in a very marked way their relation both to England and to their own realm. Its first result was the fixing of the royal residence in their new southern dominion at Edinburgh; and the English civilization which surrounded them from the moment of this settlement on what was purely English ground changed the Scot Kings in all but blood into Englishmen. The marriage of King Malcolm with Margaret, the sister of Eadgar Ætheling, not only

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hastened this change but opened a way to the English crown. Their children were regarded by a large party within England as representatives of the older royal race and as claimants of the throne, and this danger grew as William's devastation of the North not only drove fresh multitudes of Englishmen to settle in the Lowlands but filled the Scotch court with English nobles who fled thither for refuge. So formidable indeed became the pretensions of the Scot Kings that they forced the ablest of our Norman sovereigns into a complete change of policy. The Conqueror and William the Red had met the threats of the Scot sovereigns by invasions which ended again and again in an illusory homage, but the marriage of Henry the First with the Scottish Matilda robbed the claims of the Scottish line of much of their force while it enabled him to draw their kings into far closer relations with the Norman throne. King David not only abandoned the ambitious dreams of his predecessors to place himself at the head of his niece Matilda's party in her contest with Stephen, but as Henry's brother-in-law he figured as the first noble of the English Court and found English models and English support in the work of organization which he attempted within his own dominions. As the marriage with Margaret had changed Malcolm from a Celtic chieftain into an English King, so that of Matilda brought about the conversion of David into a Norman and feudal sovereign. His court was filled with Norman nobles from the South, such as the Balliols and Bruces who were destined to play so great a part afterwards but who now for the first time obtained fiefs in the Scottish realm, and a feudal jurisprudence modelled on that of England was introduced into the Lowlands.

Scotch and English Crowns.

A fresh connexion between Scotland and the English sovereigns began with the grant of lordships within England itself to the Scot kings or their sons. The Earldom of Northumberland was held by David's son Henry, that of

Huntingdon by Henry the Lion. Homage was sometimes rendered, whether for these lordships, for the Lowlands, or for the whole Scottish realm, but it was the capture of William the Lion during the revolt of the English baronage which first suggested to the ambition of Henry the Second the project of a closer dependence of Scotland on the English Crown. To gain his freedom William consented to hold his kingdom of Henry and his heirs. The prelates and lords of Scotland did homage to Henry as to their direct lord, and a right of appeal in all Scotch causes was allowed to the superior court of the English suzerain. From this bondage however Scotland was freed by the prodigality of Richard who allowed her to buy back the freedom she had forfeited. Both sides fell into their old position, but both were ceasing gradually to remember the distinctions between the various relations in which the Scot King stood for his different provinces to the English Crown. Scotland had come to be thought of as a single country; and the court of London transferred to the whole of it those claims of direct feudal suzerainty which at most applied only to Strathclyde, while the court of Edinburgh looked on the English Lowlands as holding no closer relation to England than the Pictish lands beyond the Forth. Any difficulties which arose were evaded by a legal compromise. The Scot Kings repeatedly did homage to the English sovereign but with a reservation of rights which were prudently left unspecified. The English King accepted the homage on the assumption that it was rendered to him as overlord of the Scottish realm, and this assumption was neither granted nor denied. For nearly a hundred years the relations of the two countries were thus kept peaceful and friendly, and the death of Alexander the Third seemed destined to remove even the necessity of protests by a closer union of the two kingdoms. Alexander had wedded his only daughter to the King of Norway, and after long negotiation the Scotch Parliament proposed the marriage of Margaret, "the Maid of Norway," the girl who

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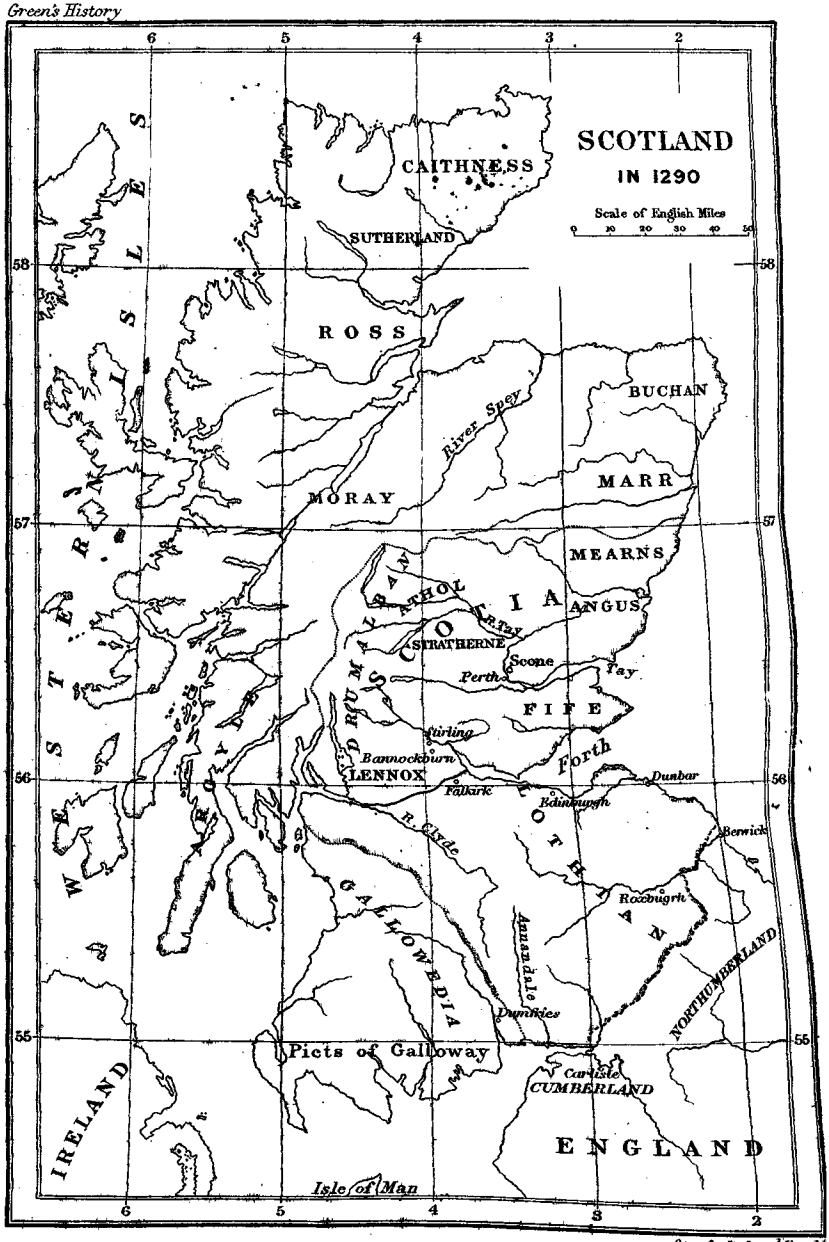
was the only issue of this marriage and so heiress of the kingdom, with the son of Edward the First. It was however carefully provided in the marriage treaty which was concluded at Brigham in 1290 that Scotland should remain a separate and free kingdom, and that its laws and customs should be preserved inviolate. No military aid was to be claimed by the English King, no Scotch appeal to be carried to an English court. But this project was abruptly frustrated by the child's death during her voyage to Scotland in the following October, and with the rise of claimant after claimant of the vacant throne Edward was drawn into far other relations to the Scottish realm.

The Scotch Succession.

Of the thirteen pretenders to the throne of Scotland only three could be regarded as serious claimants. By the extinction of the line of William the Lion the right of succession passed to the daughters of his brother David. The claim of John Balliol, Lord of Galloway, rested on his descent from the elder of these; that of Robert Bruce, Lord of Annandale, on his descent from the second; that of John Hastings, Lord of Abergavenny, on his descent from the third. It is clear that at this crisis every one in Scotland or out of it recognized some sort of overlordship in Edward, for the Norwegian King, the Primate of St. Andrews, and seven of the Scotch Earls had already appealed to him before Margaret's death; and her death was followed by the consent both of the claimants and the Council of Regency to refer the question of the succession to his decision in a Parliament at Norham. But the overlordship which the Scots acknowledged was something far less direct and definite than the superiority which Edward claimed at the opening of this conference in May, 1291. His claim was supported by excerpts from monastic chronicles and by the slow advance of an English army; while the Scotch lords, taken by surprize, found little help in the delay which was granted them. At the opening of June therefore in common with nine of the claimants they formally admitted Edward's direct suzerainty. To the nobles in fact the



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concession must have seemed a small one, for like the principal claimants they were for the most part Norman in blood, with estates in both countries, and looking for honours and pensions from the English Court. From the Commons who were gathered with the nobles at Norham no such admission of Edward's claims could be extorted; but in Scotland, feudalized as it had been by David, the Commons were as yet of little weight and their opposition was quietly passed by. All the rights of a feudal suzerain were at once assumed by the English King; he entered into the possession of the country as into that of a disputed fief to be held by its overlord till the dispute was settled, his peace was sworn throughout the land, its castles delivered into his charge, while its bishops and nobles swore homage to him directly as their lord superior. Scotland was thus reduced to the subjection which she had experienced under Henry the Second; but the full discussion which followed over the various claims to the throne showed that while exacting to the full what he believed to be his right Edward desired to do justice to the country itself. The body of commissioners which the King named to report on the claims to the throne were mainly Scotch. A proposal for the partition of the realm among the claimants was rejected as contrary to Scotch law. On the report of the commissioners after a twelvemonth's investigation in favour of Balliol as representative of the elder branch at the close of the year 1292, his homage was accepted for the whole kingdom of Scotland with a full acknowledgement of the services due from him to its overlord. The castles were at once delivered to the new monarch, and for a time there was peace.

Edward and Scotland.

With the accession of Balliol and the rendering of his homage for the Scottish realm the greatness of Edward reached its height. He was lord of Britain as no English King had been before. The last traces of Welsh independence were trodden under foot. The shadowy claims of supremacy over Scotland were changed into a direct

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overlordship. Across the one sea Edward was lord of Guienne, across the other of Ireland, and in England itself a wise and generous policy had knit the whole nation round his throne. Firmly as he still clung to prerogatives which the baronage were as firm not to own, the main struggle for the Charter was over. Justice and good government were secured. The personal despotism which John had striven to build up, the imperial autocracy which had haunted the imagination of Henry the Third, were alike set aside. The rule of Edward, vigorous and effective as it was, was a rule of law, and of law enacted not by the royal will, but by the common council of the realm. Never had English ruler reached a greater height of power, nor was there any sign to warn the King of the troubles which awaited him. France, jealous as it was of his greatness and covetous of his Gascon possessions, he could hold at bay. Wales was growing tranquil. Scotland gave few signs of discontent or restlessness in the first year that followed the homage of its King. Under John Balliol it had simply fallen back into the position of dependence which it held under William the Lion; and Edward had no purpose of pushing further his rights as suzerain than Henry the Second had done. One claim of the English Crown indeed was soon a subject of dispute between the lawyers of the Scotch and of the English Council boards. Edward would have granted as freely as Balliol himself that though Scotland was a dependent kingdom it was far from being an ordinary fief of the English Crown. By feudal custom a distinction had always been held to exist between the relations of a dependent king to a superior lord and those of a vassal noble to his sovereign. At Balliol's homage indeed Edward had disclaimed any right to the ordinary feudal incidents of a fief, those of wardship or marriage, and in this disclaimer he was only repeating the reservations of the marriage treaty of Brigham. There were other customs of the Scotch realm as incontestable as these.

Even after the treaty of Falaise the Scotch King had not been held bound to attend the council of the English baronage, to do service in English warfare, or to contribute on the part of his Scotch realm to English aids. If no express acknowledgement of these rights had been made by Edward, for some time after his acceptance of Balliol's homage they were practically observed. The claim of independent justice was more doubtful, as it was of higher import than these. The judicial independence of Scotland had been expressly reserved in the marriage treaty. It was certain that no appeal from a Scotch King's court to that of his overlord had been allowed since the days of William the Lion. But in the jurisprudence of the feudal lawyers the right of ultimate appeal was the test of sovereignty, and Edward regarded Balliol's homage as having placed him precisely in the position of William the Lion and subjected his decisions to those of his overlord. He was resolute therefore to assert the supremacy of his court and to receive Scotch appeals.

The French Attack.

Even here however the quarrel seemed likely to end only in legal bickering. Balliol at first gave way, and it was not till 1293 that he alleged himself forced by the resentment both of his Baronage and his people to take up an attitude of resistance. While appearing therefore formally at Westminster he refused to answer an appeal before the English courts save by advice of his Council. But real as the resentment of his barons may have been, it was not Scotland which really spurred Balliol to this defiance. His wounded pride had made him the tool of a power beyond the sea. The keenness with which France had watched every step of Edward's success in the north sprang not merely from a natural jealousy of his greatness but from its bearing on a great object of French ambition. One fragment of Eleanor's inheritance still remained to her descendants, Guienne and Gascony, the fair lands along the Garonne and the territory which

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stretched south of that river to the Pyrenees. It was this territory that now tempted the greed of Philip the Fair, and it was in feeding the strife between England and the Scotch King that Philip saw an opening for winning it. French envoys therefore brought promises of aid to the Scotch Court; and no sooner had these intrigues moved Balliol to resent the claims of his overlord than Philip found a pretext for open quarrel with Edward in the frays which went constantly on in the Channel between the mariners of Normandy and those of the Cinque Ports. They culminated at this moment in a great sea-fight which proved fatal to eight thousand Frenchmen, and for this Philip haughtily demanded redress. Edward saw at once the danger of his position. He did his best to allay the storm by promise of satisfaction to France, and by addressing threats of punishment to the English seamen. But Philip still clung to his wrong, while the national passion which was to prove for a hundred years to come strong enough to hold down the royal policy of peace showed itself in a characteristic defiance with which the seamen of the Cinque Ports met Edward's menaces. "Be the King's Council well advised," ran this remonstrance, "that if wrong or grievance be done them in any fashion against right, they will sooner forsake wives, children, and all that they have, and go seek through the seas where they shall think to make their profit." In spite therefore of Edward's efforts the contest continued, and Philip found in it an opportunity to cite the King before his court at Paris for wrongs done to him as suzerain. It was hard for Edward to dispute the summons without weakening the position which his own sovereign courts had taken up towards the Scotch King, and in a final effort to avert the conflict the King submitted to a legal decision of the question, and to a formal cession of Guienne into Philip's hands for forty days in acknowledgement of his supremacy. Bitter as the sacrifice must have been it failed to win peace. The forty days had no sooner passed than Philip refused to restore

the fortresses which had been left in pledge. In February 1294 he declared the English king contumacious, and in May declared his fiefs forfeited to the French Crown. Edward was driven to take up arms, but a revolt in Wales deferred the expedition to the following year. No sooner however was it again taken in hand than it became clear that a double danger had to be met. The summons which Edward addressed to the Scotch barons to follow him in arms to Guienne was disregarded. It was in truth, as we have seen, a breach of customary law, and was probably meant to force Scotland into an open declaration of its connexion with France. A second summons was followed by a more formal refusal. The greatness of the danger threw Edward on England itself. For a war in Guienne and the north he needed supplies; but he needed yet more the firm support of his people in a struggle which, little as he foresaw its ultimate results, would plainly be one of great difficulty and danger. In 1295 he called a Parliament to counsel with him on the affairs of the realm, but with the large statesmanship which distinguished him he took this occasion of giving the Parliament a shape and organization which has left its assembly the most important event in English history.

The Great Council.

To realize its importance we must briefly review the changes by which the Great Council of the Norman Kings had been gradually transforming itself into what was henceforth to be known as the English Parliament. Neither the Meeting of the Wise Men before the Conquest nor the Great Council of the Barons after it had been in any legal or formal way representative bodies. The first theoretically included all free holders of land, but it shrank at an early time into a gathering of earls, higher nobles, and bishops with the officers and thegns of the royal household. Little change was made in the composition of this assembly by the Conquest, for the Great Council of the Norman kings was supposed to include all tenants who held directly of the Crown, the

bishops and greater abbots (whose character as independent spiritual members tended more and more to merge in their position as barons), and the high officers of the Court. But though its composition remained the same, the character of the assembly was essentially altered; from a free gathering of "Wise Men" it sank to a Royal Court of feudal vassals. Its functions too seem to have become almost nominal and its powers to have been restricted to the sanctioning, without debate or possibility of refusal, all grants demanded from it by the Crown. But nominal as such a sanction might be, the "counsel and consent" of the Great Council was necessary for the legal validity of every considerable fiscal or political measure. Its existence therefore remained an effectual protest against the imperial theories advanced by the lawyers of Henry the Second which declared all legislative power to reside wholly in the sovereign. It was in fact under Henry that these assemblies became more regular, and their functions more important. The reforms which marked his reign were issued in the Great Council, and even financial matters were suffered to be debated there. But it was not till the grant of the Great Charter that the powers of this assembly over taxation were formally recognized, and the principle established that no burthen beyond the customary feudal aids might be imposed "save by the Common Council of the Realm."

Greater and Lesser Barons.

The same document first expressly regulated its form. In theory, as we have seen, the Great Council consisted of all who held land directly of the Crown. But the same causes which restricted attendance at the Witenagemote to the greater nobles told on the actual composition of the Council of Barons. While the attendance of the ordinary tenants in chief, the Knights or "Lesser Barons" as they were called, was burthensome from its expense to themselves, their numbers and their dependence on the higher nobles made the assembly of these knights dangerous to the Crown. As early therefore as the

time of Henry the First we find a distinction recognized between the "Greater Barons," of whom the Council was usually composed, and the "Lesser Barons" who formed the bulk of the tenants of the Crown. But though the attendance of the latter had become rare their right of attendance remained intact. While enacting that the prelates and greater barons should be summoned by special writs to each gathering of the Council a remarkable provision of the Great Charter orders a general summons to be issued through the Sheriff to all direct tenants of the Crown. The provision was probably intended to rouse the lesser Baronage to the exercize of rights which had practically passed into desuetude, but as the clause is omitted in later issues of the Charter we may doubt whether the principle it embodied ever received more than a very limited application. There are traces of the attendance of a few of the lesser knighthood, gentry perhaps of the neighbourhood where the assembly was held, in some of its meetings under Henry the Third, but till a late period in the reign of his successor the Great Council practically remained a gathering of the greater barons, the prelates, and the high officers of the Crown.

Constitutional Influence of Finance.

The change which the Great Charter had failed to accomplish was now however brought about by the social circumstances of the time. One of the most remarkable of these was a steady decrease in the number of the greater nobles. The bulk of the earldoms had already lapsed to the Crown through the extinction of the families of their possessors; of the greater baronies, many had practically ceased to exist by their division among female co-heiresses, many through the constant struggle of the poorer nobles to rid themselves of their rank by a disclaimer so as to escape the burthen of higher taxation and attendance in Parliament which it involved. How far this diminution had gone we may see from the fact that hardly more than a hundred barons sat in the earlier Councils of Edward's reign. But while the number of

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those who actually exercized the privilege of assisting in Parliament was rapidly diminishing, the numbers and wealth of the "lesser baronage," whose right of attendance had become a mere constitutional tradition, was as rapidly increasing. The long peace and prosperity of the realm, the extension of its commerce and the increased export of wool, were swelling the ranks and incomes of the country gentry as well as of the freeholders and substantial yeomanry. We have already noticed the effects of the increase of wealth in begetting a passion for the possession of land which makes this reign so critical a period in the history of the English freeholder; but the same tendency had to some extent existed in the preceding century, and it was a consciousness of the growing importance of this class of rural proprietors which induced the barons at the moment of the Great Charter to make their fruitless attempt to induce them to take part in the deliberations of the Great Council. But while the barons desired their presence as an aid against the Crown, the Crown itself desired it as a means of rendering taxation more efficient. So long as the Great Council remained a mere assembly of magnates it was necessary for the King's ministers to treat separately with the other orders of the state as to the amount and assessment of their contributions. The grant made in the Great Council was binding only on the barons and prelates who made it; but before the aids of the boroughs, the Church, or the shires could reach the royal treasury, a separate negotiation had to be conducted by the officers of the Exchequer with the reeves of each town, the sheriff and shire-court of each county, and the archdeacons of each diocese. Bargains of this sort would be the more tedious and disappointing as the necessities of the Crown increased in the later years of Edward, and it became a matter of fiscal expediency to obtain the sanction of any proposed taxation through the presence of these classes in the Great Council itself.

The effort however to revive the old personal attendance

of the lesser baronage which had broken down half a century before could hardly be renewed at a time when the increase of their numbers made it more impracticable than ever; but a means of escape from this difficulty was fortunately suggested by the very nature of the court through which alone a summons could be addressed to the landed knighthood. Amidst the many judicial reforms of Henry or Edward the Shire Court remained unchanged. The haunted mound or the immemorial oak round which the assembly gathered (for the court was often held in the open air) were the relics of a time before the free kingdom had sunk into a shire and its Meetings of the Wise into a County Court. But save that the King's reeve had taken the place of the King and that the Norman legislation had displaced the Bishop and set four Coroners by the Sheriff's side, the gathering of the freeholders remained much as of old. The local knighthood, the yeomanry, the husbandmen of the county, were all represented in the crowd that gathered round the Sheriff, as guarded by his liveried followers he published the King's writs, announced his demand of aids, received the presentment of criminals and the inquest of the local jurors, assessed the taxation of each district, or listened solemnly to appeals for justice, civil and criminal, from all who held themselves oppressed in the lesser courts of the hundred or the soke. It was in the County Court alone that the Sheriff could legally summon the lesser baronage to attend the Great Council, and it was in the actual constitution of this assembly that the Crown found a solution of the difficulty which we have stated. For the principle of representation by which it was finally solved was coeval with the Shire Court itself. In all cases of civil or criminal justice the twelve sworn assessors of the Sheriff, as members of a class, though not formally deputed for that purpose, practically represented the judicial opinion of the county at large. From every hundred came groups of twelve sworn deputies, the "jurors" through

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whom the presentments of the district were made to the royal officer and with whom the assessment of its share in the general taxation was arranged. The husbandmen on the outskirts of the crowd, clad in the brown smock frock which still lingers in the garb of our carters and ploughmen, were broken up into little knots of five, a reeve and four assistants, each of which knots formed the representative of a rural township. If in fact we regard the Shire Courts as lineally the descendants of our earliest English Witenagemotes, we may justly claim the principle of parliamentary representation as among the oldest of our institutions.

Knights of the Shire.

It was easy to give this principle a further extension by the choice of representatives of the lesser barons in the shire courts to which they were summoned; but it was only slowly and tentatively that this process was applied to the reconstitution of the Great Council. As early as the close of John's reign there are indications of the approaching change in the summons of "four discreet knights" from every county. Fresh need of local support was felt by both parties in the conflict of the succeeding reign, and Henry and his barons alike summoned knights from each shire "to meet on the common business of the realm." It was no doubt with the same purpose that the writs of Earl Simon ordered the choice of knights in each shire for his famous Parliament of 1265. Something like a continuous attendance may be dated from the accession of Edward, but it was long before the knights were regarded as more than local deputies for the assessment of taxation or admitted to a share in the general business of the Great Council. The statute "Quia Emptores," for instance, was passed in it before the knights who had been summoned could attend. Their participation in the deliberative power of Parliament, as well as their regular and continuous attendance, dates only from the Parliament of 1295. But a far greater constitutional change in their position had already taken place through the extension of electoral rights to the

freeholders at large. The one class entitled to a seat in the Great Council was, as we have seen, that of the lesser baronage; and it was of the lesser baronage alone that the knights were in theory the representatives. But the necessity of holding their election in the County Court rendered any restriction of the electoral body physically impossible. The court was composed of the whole body of freeholders, and no sheriff could distinguish the "aye, aye" of the yeoman from the "aye, aye" of the lesser baron. From the first moment therefore of their attendance we find the knights regarded not as mere representatives of the baronage but as knights of the shire, and by this silent revolution the whole body of the rural freeholders were admitted to a share in the government of the realm.

Boroughs and the Crown.

The financial difficulties of the Crown led to a far more radical revolution in the admission into the Great Council of representatives from the boroughs. The presence of knights from each shire was the recognition of an older right, but no right of attendance or share in the national "counsel and assent" could be pleaded for the burgesses of the towns. On the other hand the rapid developement of their wealth made them every day more important as elements in the national taxation. From all payment of the dues or fines exacted by the King as the original lord of the soil on which they had in most cases grown up the towns had long since freed themselves by what was called the purchase of the "farm of the borough;" in other words, by the commutation of these uncertain dues for a fixed sum paid annually to the Crown and apportioned by their own magistrates among the general body of the burghers. All that the King legally retained was the right enjoyed by every great proprietor of levying a corresponding taxation on his tenants in demesne under the name of "a free aid" whenever a grant was made for the national necessities by the barons of the Great Council. But the temptation of appropriating the growing wealth of the mercantile class proved stronger than legal restric-

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tions, and we find both Henry the Third and his son assuming a right of imposing taxes at pleasure and without any authority from the Council even over London itself. The burgesses could refuse indeed the invitation to contribute to the "free aids" demanded by the royal officers, but the suspension of their markets or trading privileges brought them in the end to submission. Each of these "free aids" however had to be extorted after a long wrangle between the borough and the officers of the Exchequer; and if the towns were driven to comply with what they considered an extortion they could generally force the Crown by evasions and delays to a compromise and abatement of its original demands.

Burgesses in Parliament.

The same financial reasons therefore existed for desiring the presence of borough representatives in the Great Council as existed in the case of the shires; but it was the genius of Earl Simon which first broke through the older constitutional tradition and summoned two burgesses from each town to the Parliament of 1265. Time had indeed to pass before the large and statesmanlike conception of the great patriot could meet with full acceptance. Through the earlier part of Edward's reign we find a few instances of the presence of representatives from the towns, but their scanty numbers and the irregularity of their attendance show that they were summoned rather to afford financial information to the Great Council than as representatives in it of an Estate of the Realm. But every year pleaded stronger and stronger for their inclusion, and in the Parliament of 1295 that of 1265 found itself at last reproduced. "It was from me that he learnt it," Earl Simon had cried, as he recognized the military skill of Edward's onset at Evesham; "it was from me that he learnt it," his spirit might have exclaimed as he saw the King gathering at last two burgesses "from every city, borough, and leading town" within his realm to sit side by side with the knights, nobles, and barons of the Great Council. To the Crown the change was from the first an

advantageous one. The grants of subsidies by the burgesses in Parliament proved more profitable than the previous extortions of the Exchequer. The proportions of their grant generally exceeded that of the other estates. Their representatives too proved far more compliant with the royal will than the barons or knights of the shire; only on one occasion during Edward's reign did the burgesses waver from their general support of the Crown.

Reluctance to attend.

It was easy indeed to control them, for the selection of boroughs to be represented remained wholly in the King's hands, and their numbers could be increased or diminished at the King's pleasure. The determination was left to the sheriff, and at a hint from the royal Council a sheriff of Wilts would cut down the number of represented boroughs in his shire from eleven to three, or a sheriff of Bucks declare he could find but a single borough, that of Wycomb, within the bounds of his county. Nor was this exercize of the prerogative hampered by any anxiety on the part of the towns to claim representative privileges. It was hard to suspect that a power before which the Crown would have to bow lay in the ranks of soberly-clad traders, summoned only to assess the contributions of their boroughs, and whose attendance was as difficult to secure as it seemed burthensome to themselves and the towns who sent them. The mass of citizens took little or no part in their choice, for they were elected in the county court by a few of the principal burghers deputed for the purpose; but the cost of their maintenance, the two shillings a day paid to the burgess by his town as four were paid to the knight by his county, was a burden from which the boroughs made desperate efforts to escape. Some persisted in making no return to the sheriff. Some bought charters of exemption from the troublesome privilege. Of the 165 who were summoned by Edward the First more than a third ceased to send representatives after a single compliance with the royal summons. During the whole time from the reign of

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Edward the Third to the reign of Henry the Sixth the sheriff of Lancashire declined to return the names of any boroughs at all within that county "on account of their poverty." Nor were the representatives themselves more anxious to appear than their boroughs to send them. The busy country squire and the thrifty trader were equally reluctant to undergo the trouble and expense of a journey to Westminster. Legal measures were often necessary to ensure their presence. Writs still exist in abundance such as that by which Walter le Rous is "held to bail in eight oxen and four cart-horses to come before the King on the day specified" for attendance in Parliament. But in spite of obstacles such as these the presence of representatives from the boroughs may be regarded as continuous from the Parliament of 1295. As the representation of the lesser barons had widened through a silent change into that of the shire, so that of the boroughs—restricted in theory to those in the royal demesne—seems practically from Edward's time to have been extended to all who were in a condition to pay the cost of their representatives' support. By a change as silent within the Parliament itself the burgess, originally summoned to take part only in matters of taxation, was at last admitted to a full share in the deliberations and authority of the other orders of the State.

Parliament and the Clergy.

The admission of the burgesses and knights of the shire to the assembly of 1295 completed the fabric of our representative constitution. The Great Council of the Barons became the Parliament of the Realm. Every order of the state found itself represented in this assembly, and took part in the grant of supplies, the work of legislation, and in the end the control of government. But though in all essential points the character of Parliament has remained the same from that time to this, there were some remarkable particulars in which the assembly of 1295 differed widely from the present Parliament at St. Stephen's. Some of these differences, such as those which sprang from the increased powers and changed relations of the

different orders among themselves, we shall have occasion to consider at a later time. But a difference of a far more startling kind than these lay in the presence of the clergy. If there is any part in the parliamentary scheme of Edward the First which can be regarded as especially his own, it is his project for the representation of the ecclesiastical order. The King had twice at least summoned its "proctors" to Great Councils before 1295, but it was then only that the complete representation of the Church was definitely organized by the insertion of a clause in the writ which summoned a bishop to Parliament requiring the personal attendance of all archdeacons, deans, or priors of cathedral churches, of a proctor for each cathedral chapter, and two for the clergy within his diocese. The clause is repeated in the writs of the present day, but its practical effect was foiled almost from the first by the resolute opposition of those to whom it was addressed. What the towns failed in doing the clergy actually did. Even when forced to comply with the royal summons, as they seem to have been forced during Edward's reign, they sat jealously by themselves, and their refusal to vote supplies in any but their own provincial assemblies, or convocations, of Canterbury and York left the Crown without a motive for insisting on their continued attendance. Their presence indeed, though still at times granted on some solemn occasions, became so pure a formality that by the end of the fifteenth century it had sunk wholly into desuetude. In their anxiety to preserve their existence as an isolated and privileged order the clergy flung away a power which, had they retained it, would have ruinously hampered the healthy developement of the state. To take a single instance, it is difficult to see how the great changes of the Reformation could have been brought about had a good half of the House of Commons consisted purely of churchmen, whose numbers would have been backed by the weight of their property as possessors of a third of the landed estates of the realm.

Parliament at Westminster.

A hardly less important difference may be found in the gradual restriction of the meetings of Parliament to Westminster. The names of Edward's statutes remind us of its convocation at the most various quarters, at Winchester, Acton Burnell, Northampton. It was at a later time that Parliament became settled in the straggling village which had grown up in the marshy swamp of the Isle of Thorns beside the palace whose embattled pile towered over the Thames and the new West-minster which was still rising in Edward's day on the site of the older church of the Confessor. It is possible that, while contributing greatly to its constitutional importance, this settlement of the Parliament may have helped to throw into the background its character as a supreme court of appeal. The proclamation by which it was called together invited "all who had any grace to demand of the King in Parliament, or any plaint to make of matters which could not be redressed or determined by ordinary course of law, or who had been in any way aggrieved by any of the King's ministers or justices or sheriffs, or their bailiffs, or any other officer, or have been unduly assessed, rated, charged, or sur-charged to aids, subsidies, or taxes," to deliver their petitions to receivers who sat in the Great Hall of the Palace of Westminster. The petitions were forwarded to the King's Council, and it was probably the extension of the jurisdiction of that body and the rise of the Court of Chancery which reduced this ancient right of the subject to the formal election of "Triers of Petitions" at the opening of every new Parliament by the House of Lords, a usage which is still continued. But it must have been owing to some memory of the older custom that the subject always looked for redress against injuries from the Crown or its ministers to the Parliament of the realm.

Conquest of Scotland.

The subsidies granted by the Parliament of 1295 furnished the King with the means of warfare with both Scotland and France while they assured him of the

sympathy of his people in the contest. But from the first the reluctance of Edward to enter on the double war was strongly marked. The refusal of the Scotch baronage to obey his summons had been followed on Balliol's part by two secret steps which made a struggle inevitable, by a request to Rome for absolution from his oath of fealty and by a treaty of alliance with Philip the Fair. As yet however no open breach had taken place, and while Edward in 1296 summoned his knighthood to meet him in the north he called a Parliament at Newcastle in the hope of bringing about an accommodation with the Scot King. But all thought of accommodation was roughly ended by the refusal of Balliol to attend the Parliament, by the rout of a small body of English troops, and by the Scotch investment of Carlisle. Taken as he was by surprize, Edward showed at once the vigour and rapidity of his temper. His army marched upon Berwick. The town was a rich and well-peopled one, and although a wooden stockade furnished its only rampart the serried ranks of citizens behind it gave little hope of an easy conquest. Their taunts indeed stung the King to the quick. As his engineers threw up rough entrenchments for the besieging army the burghers bade him wait till he won the town before he began digging round it. "Kynge Edward," they shouted, "waune thou havest Berwick, pike thee; waune thou havest geten, dike thee." But the stockade was stormed with the loss of a single knight, nearly eight thousand of the citizens were mown down in a ruthless carnage, and a handful of Flemish traders who held the town-hall stoutly against all assailants were burned alive in it. The massacre only ceased when a procession of priests bore the host to the King's presence, praying for mercy. Edward with a sudden and characteristic burst of tears called off his troops; but the town was ruined for ever, and the greatest merchant city of northern Britain sank from that time into a petty sea-port.

At Berwick Edward received Balliol's formal defiance.

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"Has the fool done this folly?" the King cried in haughty scorn; "if he will not come to us, we will come to him." The terrible slaughter however had done its work, and his march northward was a triumphal progress. Edinburgh, Stirling, and Perth opened their gates, Bruce joined the English army, and Balliol himself surrendered and passed without a blow from his throne to an English prison. No further punishment however was exacted from the prostrate realm. Edward simply treated it as a fief, and declared its forfeiture to be the legal consequence of Balliol's treason. It lapsed in fact to its suzerain; and its earls, barons, and gentry swore homage in Parliament at Berwick to Edward as their King. The sacred stone on which its older sovereigns had been installed, an oblong block of limestone which legend asserted to have been the pillow of Jacob as angels ascended and descended upon him, was removed from Scone and placed in Westminster by the shrine of the Confessor. It was enclosed by Edward's order in a stately seat, which became from that hour the coronation chair of English Kings. To the King himself the whole business must have seemed another and easier conquest of Wales, and the mercy and just government which had followed his first success followed his second also. The government of the new dependency was entrusted to John of Warenne, Earl of Surrey, at the head of an English Council of Regency. Pardon was freely extended to all who had resisted the invasion, and order and public peace were rigidly enforced.

Confirmation of the Charters.

But the triumph, rapid and complete as it was, had more than exhausted the aids granted by the Parliament. The treasury was utterly drained. The struggle indeed widened as every month went on; the costly fight with the French in Gascony called for supplies, while Edward was planning a yet costlier attack on northern France with the aid of Flanders. Need drove him on his return from Scotland in 1297 to measures of tyrannical extortion which seemed to recall the times of John. His first blow fell on

the Church. At the close of 1294 he had already demanded half their annual income from the clergy, and so terrible was his wrath at their resistance that the Dean of St. Paul's, who stood forth to remonstrate, dropped dead of sheer terror at his feet. "If any oppose the King's demand," said a royal envoy in the midst of the Convocation, "let him stand up that he may be noted as an enemy to the King's peace." The outraged Churchmen fell back on an untenable plea that their aid was due solely to Rome, and alleged the bull of "Clericis Laicos," issued by Boniface the Eighth at this moment, a bull which forbad the clergy to pay secular taxes from their ecclesiastical revenues, as a ground for refusing to comply with further taxation. In 1297 Archbishop Winchelsey refused on the ground of this bull to make any grant, and Edward met his refusal by a general outlawry of the whole order. The King's courts were closed, and all justice denied to those who refused the King aid. By their actual plea the clergy had put themselves formally in the wrong, and the outlawry soon forced them to submission; but their aid did little to recruit the exhausted treasury. The pressure of the war steadily increased, and far wider measures of arbitrary taxation were needful to equip an expedition which Edward prepared to lead in person to Flanders. The country gentlemen were compelled to take up knighthood or to compound for exemption from the burthensome honour, and forced contributions of cattle and corn were demanded from the counties. Edward no doubt purposed to pay honestly for these supplies, but his exactions from the merchant class rested on a deliberate theory of his royal rights. He looked on the customs as levied absolutely at his pleasure, and the export duty on wool—now the staple produce of the country—was raised to six times its former amount. Although he infringed no positive provision of charter or statute in his action, it was plain that his course really undid all that had been gained by the Barons' war. But the blow had no sooner been struck than Edward found

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stout resistance within his realm. The barons drew together and called a meeting for the redress of their grievances. The two greatest of the English nobles, Humfrey de Bohun, Earl of Hereford, and Roger Bigod, Earl of Norfolk, placed themselves at the head of the opposition. The first was Constable, the second Earl Marshal, and Edward bade them lead a force to Gascony as his lieutenants while he himself sailed to Flanders. Their departure would have left the Baronage without leaders, and the two earls availed themselves of a plea that they were not bound to foreign service save in attendance on the King to refuse obedience to the royal orders. "By God, Sir Earl," swore the King to the Earl Marshal, "you shall either go or hang!" "By God, Sir King," was the cool reply, "I will neither go nor hang!" Both parties separated in bitter anger; the King to seize fresh wool, to outlaw the clergy, and to call an army to his aid; the barons to gather in arms, backed by the excommunication of the Primate. But the strife went no further than words. Ere the Parliament he had convened could meet, Edward had discovered his own powerlessness; Winchelsey offered his mediation; and Edward confirmed the Great Charter and the Charter of Forests as the price of a grant from the clergy and a subsidy from the Commons. With one of those sudden revulsions of feeling of which his nature was capable the King stood before his people in Westminster Hall and owned with a burst of tears that he had taken their substance without due warrant of law. His passionate appeal to their loyalty wrested a reluctant assent to the prosecution of the war, and in August Edward sailed for Flanders, leaving his son regent of the realm. But the crisis had taught the need of further securities against the royal power, and as Edward was about to embark the barons demanded his acceptance of additional articles to the Charter, expressly renouncing his right of taxing the nation without its own consent. The King sailed without complying, but Winchelsey joined the two earls and the citizens of London in

forbidding any levy of supplies till the Great Charter with these clauses was again confirmed, and the trouble in Scotland as well as the still pending strife with France left Edward helpless in the barons' hands. The Great Charter and the Charter of the Forests were solemnly confirmed by him at Ghent in November; and formal pardon was issued to the Earls of Hereford and Norfolk.

Revolt of Scotland.

The confirmation of the Charter, the renunciation of any right to the exactions by which the people were aggrieved, the pledge that the King would no more take "such aids, tasks, and prizes but by common assent of the realm," the promise not to impose on wool any heavy customs or "mâletot" without the same assent, was the close of the great struggle which had begun at Runnymede. The clauses so soon removed from the Great Charter were now restored; and evade them as they might, the kings were never able to free themselves from the obligation to seek aid solely from the general consent of their subjects. It was Scotland which had won this victory for English freedom. At the moment when Edward and the earls stood face to face the King saw his work in the north suddenly undone. Both the justice and injustice of the new rule proved fatal to it. The wrath of the Scots, already kindled by the intrusion of English priests into Scotch livings and by the grant of lands across the border to English barons, was fanned to fury by the strict administration of law and the repression of feuds and cattle-lifting. The disbanding too of troops, which was caused by the penury of the royal exchequer, united with the licence of the soldiery who remained to quicken the national sense of wrong. The disgraceful submission of their leaders brought the people themselves to the front. In spite of a hundred years of peace the farmer of Fife or the Lowlands and the artizan of the towns remained stout-hearted Northumbrian Englishmen. They had never consented to Edward's supremacy, and their blood rose against the insolent rule of the stranger. The genius of

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an outlaw knight, William Wallace, saw in their smouldering discontent a hope of freedom for his country, and his daring raids on outlying parties of the English soldiery roused the country at last into revolt.

Of Wallace himself, of his life or temper, we know little or nothing; the very traditions of his gigantic stature and enormous strength are dim and unhistorical. But the [redacted] Scotch people has guided it aright in choosinstinct of the[redacted] the first to assert ing him for its national hero. He was [redacted] the despair freedom as a national birthright, and amidst [redacted]ns. At of nobles and priests to call the people itself to ar[redacted]oast the head of an army drawn principally from the [redacted] districts north of the Tay, which were inhabited by a population of the same blood as that of the Lowlands, Wallace in September 1297 encamped near Stirling, the pass between the north and the south, and awaited the English advance. It was here that he was found by the English army. The offers of John of Warenne were scornfully rejected: "We have come," said the Scottish leader, "not to make peace, but to free our country." The position of Wallace behind a loop of Forth was in fact chosen with consummate skill. The one bridge which crossed the river was only broad enough to admit two horsemen abreast; and though the English army had been passing from daybreak but half its force was across at noon when Wallace closed on it and cut it after a short combat to pieces in sight of its comrades. The retreat of the Earl of Surrey over the border left Wallace head of the country he had freed, and for a few months he acted as "Guardian of the Realm" in Balliol's name, and headed a wild foray into Northumberland in which the barbarous cruelties of his men left a bitter hatred behind them which was to wreak its vengeance in the later bloodshed of the war. His reduction of Stirling Castle at last called Edward to the field. In the spring of 1298 the King's diplomacy had at last wrung a truce for two years from Philip the Fair; and he at once returned to England to

face the troubles in Scotland. Marching northward with a larger host than had ever followed his banner, he was enabled by treachery to surprize Wallace as he fell back to avoid an engagement, and to force him on the twenty-second of July to battle near Falkirk. The Scotch force consisted almost wholly of foot, and Wallace drew up his spearmen in four great hollow circles or squares, the outer ranks kneeling and the whole supported by bowmen within, while a small force of horse were drawn up as a reserve in the rear. It was the formation of Waterloo, the first appearance in our history since the day of Senlac of "that unconquerable British infantry" before which chivalry was destined to go down. For a moment it had all Waterloo's success. "I have brought you to the ring, hop (dance) if you can," are words of rough humour that reveal the very soul of the patriot leader, and the serried ranks answered well to his appeal. The Bishop of Durham who led the English van shrank wisely from the look of the squares. "Back to your mass, Bishop," shouted the reckless knights behind him, but the body of horse dashed itself vainly on the wall of spears. Terror spread through the English army, and its Welsh auxiliaries drew off in a body from the field. But the generalship of Wallace was met by that of the King. Drawing his bowmen to the front, Edward riddled the Scottish ranks with arrows and then hurled his cavalry afresh on the wavering line. In a moment all was over, the maddened knights rode in and out of the broken ranks, slaying without mercy. Thousands fell on the field, and Wallace himself escaped with difficulty, followed by a handful of men.

Second Conquest of Scotland.

But ruined as the cause of freedom seemed, his work was done. He had roused Scotland into life, and even a defeat like Falkirk left her unconquered. Edward remained master only of the ground he stood on: want of supplies forced him at last to retreat; and in the summer of the following year, 1299, when Balliol, released from his English prison, withdrew into France, a regency of the

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Scotch nobles under Robert Bruce and John Comyn continued the struggle for independence. Troubles at home and danger from abroad stayed Edward's hand. The barons still distrusted his sincerity, and though at their demand he renewed the Confirmation in the spring of 1299, his attempt to add an evasive clause saving the right of the Crown proved the justice of their distrust. In spite of a fresh and unconditional renewal of it a strife over the Forest Charter went on till the opening of 1301 when a new gathering of the barons in arms with the support of Archbishop Winchelsey wrested from him its full execution. What aided freedom within was as of old the peril without. France was still menacing, and a claim advanced by Pope Boniface the Eighth at its suggestion to the feudal superiority over Scotland arrested a new advance of the King across the border. A quarrel however which broke out between Philip le Bel and the Papacy removed all obstacles. It enabled Edward to defy Boniface and to wring from France a treaty in which Scotland was abandoned. In 1304 he resumed the work of invasion, and again the nobles flung down their arms as he marched to the North. Comyn, at the head of the Regency, acknowledged his sovereignty, and the surrender of Stirling completed the conquest of Scotland. But the triumph of Edward was only the prelude to the carrying out of his designs for knitting the two countries together by a generosity and wisdom which reveal the greatness of his statesmanship. A general amnesty was extended to all who had shared in the resistance. Wallace, who refused to avail himself of Edward's mercy, was captured and condemned to death at Westminster on charges of treason, sacrilege, and robbery. The head of the great patriot, crowned in mockery with a circlet of laurel, was placed upon London Bridge. But the execution of Wallace was the one blot on Edward's clemency. With a masterly boldness he entrusted the government of the country to a council of Scotch nobles, many of whom were

freshly pardoned for their share in the war, and anticipated the policy of Cromwell by allotting ten representatives to Scotland in the Common Parliament of his realm. A Convocation was summoned at Perth for the election of these representatives, and a great judicial scheme which was promulgated in this assembly adopted the amended laws of King David as the base of a new legislation, and divided the country for judicial purposes into four districts, Lothian, Galloway, the Highlands, and the land between the Highlands and the Forth, at the head of each of which were placed two justiciaries, the one English and the other Scotch.

Rising of Bruce.

With the conquest and settlement of Scotland the glory of Edward seemed again complete. The bitterness of his humiliation at home indeed still preyed upon him, and in measure after measure we see his purpose of renewing the strife with the baronage. In 1303 he found a means of evading his pledge to levy no new taxes on merchandize save by assent of the realm in a consent of the foreign merchants, whether procured by royal pressure or no, to purchase by stated payments certain privileges of trading. In this "New Custom" lay the origin of our import duties. A formal absolution from his promises which he obtained from Pope Clement the Fifth in 1305 showed that he looked on his triumph in the North as enabling him to reopen the questions which he had yielded. But again Scotland stayed his hand. Only four months had passed since its submission, and he was preparing for a joint Parliament of the two nations at Carlisle, when the conquered country suddenly sprang again to arms. Its new leader was Robert Bruce, a grandson of one of the original claimants of the crown. The Norman house of Bruce formed a part of the Yorkshire baronage, but it had acquired through intermarriages the Earldom of Carrick and the Lordship of Annandale. Both the claimant and his son had been pretty steadily on the English side in the contest with Balliol and Wallace,

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and Robert had himself been trained in the English court and stood high in the King's favour. But the withdrawal of Balliol gave a new force to his claims upon the crown, and the discovery of an intrigue which he had set on foot with the Bishop of St. Andrews so roused Edward's jealousy that Bruce fled for his life across the border. Early in 1306 he met Comyn, the Lord of Badenoch, to whose treachery he attributed the disclosure of his plans, in the church of the Grey Friars at Dumfries, and after the interchange of a few hot words struck him with his dagger to the ground. It was an outrage that admitted of no forgiveness, and Bruce for very safety was forced to assume the crown six weeks after in the Abbey of Scone. The news roused Scotland again to arms, and summoned Edward to a fresh contest with his unconquerable foe. But the murder of Comyn had changed the King's mood to a terrible pitilessness. He threatened death against all concerned in the outrage, and exposed the Countess of Buchan, who had set the crown on Bruce's head, in a cage or open chamber built for the purpose in one of the towers of Berwick. At the solemn feast which celebrated his son's knighthood Edward vowed on the swan which formed the chief dish at the banquet to devote the rest of his days to exact vengeance from the murderer himself. But even at the moment of the vow Bruce was already flying for his life to the western islands. "Henceforth" he said to his wife at their coronation "thou art Queen of Scotland and I King." "I fear" replied Mary Bruce "we are only playing at royalty like children in their games." The play was soon turned into bitter earnest. A small English force under Aymer de Valence sufficed to rout the disorderly levies which gathered round the new monarch, and the flight of Bruce left his followers at Edward's mercy. Noble after noble was sent to the block. The Earl of Athole pleaded kindred with royalty. "His only privilege," burst forth the King, "shall be that of being hanged on a higher gallows than the rest." Knights and priests were strung up side

by side by the English justiciaries; while the wife and daughters of Robert Bruce were flung into Edward's prisons. Bruce himself had offered to capitulate to Prince Edward. But the offer only roused the old King to fury. "Who is so bold," he cried, "as to treat with our traitors without our knowledge?" and rising from his sick bed he led his army northwards in the summer of 1307 to complete the conquest. But the hand of death was upon him, and in the very sight of Scotland the old man breathed his last at Burgh-upon-sands.

BOOK IV.

THE PARLIAMENT.

1307—1461.

AUTHORITIES FOR BOOK IV.

For Edward the Second we have three important contemporaries: Thomas de la More, Trokelowe's Annals, and the life by a monk of Malmesbury printed by Hearne. The sympathies of the first are with the King, those of the last two with the Barons. Murimuth's short Chronicle is also contemporary. John Barbour's "Bruce," the great legendary storehouse for his hero's adventures, is historically worthless.

Important as it is, the reign of Edward the Third is by no means fortunate in its annalists. The concluding part of the Chronicle of Walter of Hemingford or Heminburgh seems to have been jotted down as news of the passing events reached its author: it ends at the battle of Creçy. Hearne has published another contemporary account, that of Robert of Avesbury, which closes in 1356. A third account by Knyghton, a canon of Leicester, will be found in the collection of Twysden. At the end of this century and the beginning of the next the annals which had been carried on in the Abbey of St. Albans were thrown together by Walsingham in the "Historia Anglicana" which bears his name, a compilation whose history may be found in the prefaces to the "Chronica Monasterii S. Albani" issued in the Rolls Series. An anonymous chronicler whose work is printed in the 22nd volume of the "Archæologia" has given us the story of the Good Parliament, another account is preserved in the "Chronica Angliæ from 1328 to 1388," published in the Rolls Series, and fresh light has been recently thrown on the time by the publication of a Chronicle by Adam of Usk which extends from 1377 to 1404. Fortunately the scantiness of historical narrative is compensated by the growing fulness and abundance of our Statepapers. Rymer's Fœdera is rich in diplomatic and other documents for this period, and from this time we have a storehouse of political and social information in the Parliamentary Rolls.

For the French war itself our primary authority is the Chronicle of Jehan le Bel, a canon of the church of St. Lambert of Liége, who himself served in Edward's campaign against the Scots and spent the rest of his life at the court of John of Hainault. Up to the Treaty of Bretigny, where it closes, Froissart has done little more than copy this work, making however large additions from his own enquiries, especially in the Flemish and Breton campaigns.

and in the account of Crecy. Froissart was himself a Hainaulter of Valenciennes; he held a post in Queen Philippa's household from 1361 to 1369, and under this influence produced in 1373 the first edition of his well known Chronicle. A later edition is far less English in tone, and a third version, begun by him in his old age after long absence from England, is distinctly French in its sympathies. Froissart's vivacity and picturesqueness blind us to the inaccuracy of his details; as an historical authority he is of little value. The "Fasciculi Zizaniorum" in the Rolls Series with the documents appended to it is a work of primary authority for the history of Wyclif and his followers: a selection from his English tracts has been made by Mr. T. Arnold for the University of Oxford, which has also published his "Trias." The version of the Bible that bears his name has been edited with a valuable preface by the Rev. J. Forshall and Sir F. Madden. William Longland's poem, "The Complaint of Piers the Ploughman" (edited by Mr. Skeat for the Early English Text Society) throws a flood of light on the social state of England after the Treaty of Bretigny.

The "Annals of Richard the Second and Henry the Fourth," now published by the Master of the Rolls, are our main authority for the period which follows Edward's death. They serve as the basis of the St. Alban's compilation which bears the name of Walsingham, and from which the "Life of Richard," by a monk of Evesham is for the most part derived. The same violent Lancastrian sympathy runs through Walsingham and the fifth book of Knyghton's Chronicle. The French authorities on the other hand are vehemently on Richard's side. Froissart, who ends at this time, is supplemented by the metrical history of Creton ("Archæologia," vol. xx.), and by the "Chronique de la Traison et Mort de Richart" (English Historical Society), both works of French authors and published in France in the time of Henry the Fourth, probably with the aim of arousing French feeling against the House of Lancaster and the war-policy which it had revived. The popular feeling in England may be seen in "Political Songs from Edward III. to Richard III." (Rolls Series). A poem on "The Deposition of Richard II." which has been published by the Camden Society is now ascribed to William Longland.

With Henry the Fifth our historic materials become more abundant. We have the "Acta Henrici Quinti" by Titus Livius, a chaplain in the royal army; a life by Elmham, prior of Lenton, simpler in style but identical in arrangement and facts with the former work; a biography by Robert Redman; a metrical chronicle by Elmham (published in Rolls Series in "Memorials of Henry the Fifth"); and the meagre chronicles of Hardyng and Otterbourne. The King's Norman campaigns may be studied in M. Puiseux's "Siége de Rouen" (Caen, 1867). The "Wars of the English in France" and Blondel's work "De Reductione Normanniæ" (both in Rolls Series) give ample information on the military side of this and the next reign. But with the accession of Henry the Sixth we again enter on a period of singular dearth in its historical authorities. The "Procès de Jeanne d'Arc" (published by the Société de l'Histoire de France) is the only real authority for her history. For English affairs we are reduced to the meagre accounts of William of Worcester, of the

Continuator of the Crowland Chronicle, and of Fabyan. Fabyan is a London alderman with a strong bias in favour of the House of Lancaster, and his work is useful for London only. The Continuator is one of the best of his class; and though connected with the house of York, the date of his work, which appeared soon after Bosworth Field, makes him fairly impartial; but he is sketchy and deficient in information. The more copious narrative of Polydore Vergil is far superior to these in literary ability, but of later date, and strongly Lancastrian in tone. For the struggle between Edward and Warwick, the valuable narrative of "The Arrival of Edward the Fourth" (Camden Society) may be taken as the official account on the royal side. The Paston Letters are the first instance in English history of a family correspondence, and throw great light on the social condition of the time.

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CHAPTER I.

EDWARD II.

1307—1327.

Parliament and the Kings.

In his calling together the estates of the realm Edward the First determined the course of English history. From the first moment of its appearance the Parliament became the centre of English affairs. The hundred years indeed which follow its assembly at Westminster saw its rise into a power which checked and overawed the Crown.

Of the Kings in whose reigns the Parliament gathered this mighty strength not one was likely to look with indifference on the growth of a rival authority, and the bulk of them were men who in other times would have roughly checked it. What held their hand was the need of the Crown. The century and a half that followed the gathering of the estates at Westminster was a time of almost continual war, and of the financial pressure that springs from war. It was indeed war that had gathered them. In calling his Parliament Edward the First sought mainly an effective means of procuring supplies for that policy of national consolidation which had triumphed in Wales and which seemed to be triumphing in Scotland. But the triumph in Scotland soon proved a delusive one, and the strife brought wider strifes in its train. When Edward wrung from Balliol an acknowledgement of his suzerainty he foresaw little of the war with France, the war with Spain, the quarrel with the Papacy, the upgrowth of social, of political, of religious revolution within

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Edward the Second.
1307-1327.

England itself, of which that acknowledgement was to be the prelude. But the thicker troubles gathered round England the more the royal treasury was drained, and now that arbitrary taxation was impossible the one means of filling it lay in a summons of the Houses. The Crown was chained to the Parliament by a tie of absolute need. From the first moment of parliamentary existence the life and power of the estates assembled at Westminster hung on the question of supplies. So long as war went on no ruler could dispense with the grants which fed the war and which Parliament alone could afford. But it was impossible to procure supplies save by redressing the grievances of which Parliament complained and by granting the powers which Parliament demanded. It was in vain that King after King, conscious that war bound them to the Parliament, strove to rid themselves of the war. So far was the ambition of our rulers from being the cause of the long struggle that, save in the one case of Henry the Fifth, the desperate effort of every ruler was to arrive at peace. Forced as they were to fight, their restless diplomacy strove to draw from victory as from defeat a means of escape from the strife that was enslaving the Crown. The royal Council, the royal favourites, were always on the side of peace. But fortunately for English freedom peace was impossible. The pride of the English people, the greed of France, foiled every attempt at accommodation. The wisest ministers sacrificed themselves in vain. King after King patched up truces which never grew into treaties, and concluded marriages which brought fresh discord instead of peace. War went ceaselessly on, and with the march of war went on the ceaseless growth of the Parliament.

Robert Bruce.

The death of Edward the First arrested only for a moment the advance of his army to the north. The Earl of Pembroke led it across the border, and found himself master of the country without a blow. Bruce's career became that of a desperate adventurer, for even the

Highland chiefs in whose fastnesses he found shelter were bitterly hostile to one who claimed to be King of their foes in the Lowlands. It was this adversity that transformed the murderer of Comyn into the noble leader of a nation's cause. Strong and of commanding presence, brave and genial in temper, Bruce bore the hardships of his career with a courage and hopefulness that never failed. In the legends that clustered round his name we see him listening in Highland glens to the bay of the bloodhounds on his track, or holding a pass single-handed against a crowd of savage clansmen. Sometimes the small band which clung to him were forced to support themselves by hunting and fishing, sometimes to break up for safety as their enemies tracked them to their lair. Bruce himself had more than once to fling off his coat-of-mail and scramble barefoot for very life up the crags. Little by little however the dark sky cleared. The English pressure relaxed. James Douglas, the darling of Scottish story, was the first of the Lowland Barons to rally to the Bruce, and his daring gave heart to the King's cause. Once he surprized his own house, which had been given to an Englishman, ate the dinner which was prepared for its new owner, slew his captives, and tossed their bodies on to a pile of wood at the castle gate. Then he staved in the wine-vats that the wine might mingle with their blood, and set house and wood-pile on fire.

Edward the Second.

A ferocity like this degraded everywhere the work of freedom; but the revival of the country went steadily on. Pembroke and the English forces were in fact paralyzed by a strife which had broken out in England between the new King and his baronage. The moral purpose which had raised his father to grandeur was wholly wanting in Edward the Second; he was showy, idle, and stubborn in temper; but he was far from being destitute of the intellectual quickness which seemed inborn in the Plantagenets. He had no love for his father, but he had seen him in the later years of his reign struggling

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against the pressure of the baronage, evading his pledges as to taxation, and procuring absolution from his promise to observe the clauses added to the Charter. The son's purpose was the same, that of throwing off what he looked on as the yoke of the baronage; but the means by which he designed to bring about his purpose was the choice of a minister wholly dependent on the Crown. We have already noticed the change by which the "clerks of the King's chapel," who had been the ministers of arbitrary government under the Norman and Angevin sovereigns, had been quietly superseded by the prelates and lords of the Continual Council. At the close of the late reign a direct demand on the part of the barons to nominate the great officers of state had been curtly rejected but the royal choice had been practically limited in the selection of its ministers to the class of prelates and nobles, and however closely connected with royalty they might be such officers always to a great extent shared the feelings and opinions of their order. The aim of the young King seems to have been to undo the change which had been silently brought about, and to imitate the policy of the contemporary sovereigns of France by choosing as his ministers men of an inferior position, wholly dependent on the Crown for their power, and representatives of nothing but the policy and interests of their master. Piers Gaveston, a foreigner sprung from a family of Guienne, had been his friend and companion during his father's reign, at the close of which he had been banished from the realm for his share in intrigues which divided Edward from his son. At the accession of the new king he was at once recalled, created Earl of Cornwall, and placed at the head of the administration. When Edward crossed the sea to wed Isabella of France, the daughter of Philip the Fair, a marriage planned by his father to provide against any further intervention of France in his difficulties with Scotland, the new minister was left as Regent in his room. The offence given by this rapid promotion was embittered by his personal temper. Gay,

genial, thriftless, Gaveston showed in his first acts the quickness and audacity of Southern Gaul. The older ministers were dismissed, all claims of precedence or inheritance were set aside in the distribution of offices at the coronation, while taunts and defiances goaded the proud baronage to fury. The favourite was a fine soldier, and his lance unhorsed his opponents in tourney after tourney. His reckless wit flung nicknames about the Court, the Earl of Lancaster was "the Actor," Pembroke "the Jew," Warwick "the Black Dog." But taunt and defiance broke helplessly against the iron mass of the baronage. After a few months of power the formal demand of the Parliament for his dismissal could not be resisted, and in May, 1308, Gaveston was formally banished from the realm.

Thomas of Lancaster.

But Edward was far from abandoning his favourite. In Ireland he was unfettered by the Baronage, and here Gaveston found a refuge as the King's Lieutenant while Edward sought to obtain his recall by the intervention of France and the Papacy. But the financial pressure of the Scotch war again brought the King and his Parliament together in the spring of 1309. It was only by conceding the rights which his father had sought to establish of imposing import duties on the merchants by their own assent that he procured a subsidy. The firmness of the baronage sprang from their having found a head. In no point had the policy of Henry the Third more utterly broken down than in his attempt to weaken the power of the nobles by filling the great earldoms with kinsmen of the royal house. He had made Simon of Montfort his brother-in-law only to furnish a leader to the nation in the Barons' war. In loading his second son, Edmund Crouchback, with honours and estates he raised a family to greatness which overawed the Crown. Edmund had been created Earl of Lancaster; after Evesham he had received the forfeited Earldom of Leicester; he had been made Earl of Derby on the extinction of the house of Ferrers. His son, Thomas of Lancaster, was

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the son-in-law of Henry de Lacy, and was soon to add to these lordships the Earldom of Lincoln. And to the weight of these great baronies was added his royal blood. The father of Thomas had been a titular King of Sicily. His mother was dowager Queen of Navarre. His half-sister by the mother's side was wife of the French King Philip le Bel and mother of the English Queen Isabella. He was himself a grandson of Henry the Third and not far from the succession to the throne. Had Earl Thomas been a wiser and a nobler man, his adhesion to the cause of the baronage might have guided the King into a really national policy. As it was his weight proved irresistible. When Edward at the close of the Parliament recalled Gaveston the Earl of Lancaster withdrew from the royal Council, and a Parliament which met in the spring of 1310 resolved that the affairs of the realm should be entrusted for a year to a body of twenty-one "Ordainers" with Archbishop Winchelsey at their head.

Edward and the Ordainers

Edward with Gaveston withdrew sullenly to the North. A triumph in Scotland would have given him strength to baffle the Ordainers, but he had little of his father's military skill, the wasted country made it hard to keep an army together, and after a fruitless campaign he fell back to his southern realm to meet the Parliament of 1311 and the "Ordinances" which the twenty-one laid before it. By this long and important statute Gaveston was banished, other advisers were driven from the Council, and the Florentine bankers whose loans had enabled Edward to hold the baronage at bay sent out of the realm. The customs duties imposed by Edward the First were declared to be illegal. Its administrative provisions showed the relations which the barons sought to establish between the new Parliament and the Crown. Parliaments were to be called every year, and in these assemblies the King's servants were to be brought, if need were, to justice. The great officers of state were to be appointed

with the counsel and consent of the baronage, and to be sworn in Parliament. The same consent of the barons in Parliament was to be needful ere the King could declare war or absent himself from the realm. As the Ordinances show, the baronage still looked on Parliament rather as a political organization of the nobles than as a gathering of the three Estates of the realm. The lower clergy pass unnoticed; the Commons are regarded as mere tax-payers whose part was still confined to the presentation of petitions of grievances and the grant of money. But even in this imperfect fashion the Parliament was a real representation of the country. The barons no longer depended for their force on the rise of some active leader, or gathered in exceptional assemblies to wrest reforms from the Crown by threat of war. Their action was made regular and legal. Even if the Commons took little part in forming decisions, their force when formed hung on the assent of the knights and burgesses to them; and the grant which alone could purchase from the Crown the concessions which the Baronage demanded lay absolutely within the control of the Third Estate. It was this which made the King's struggles so fruitless. He assented to the Ordinances, and then withdrawing to the North recalled Gaveston and annulled them. But Winchelsey excommunicated the favourite and the barons, gathering in arms, besieged him in Scarborough. His surrender in May 1312 ended the strife. The "Black Dog" of Warwick had sworn that the favourite should feel his teeth; and Gaveston flung himself in vain at the feet of the Earl of Lancaster, praying for pity "from his gentle lord." In defiance of the terms of his capitulation he was beheaded on Blacklow Hill.

Bannockburn.

The King's burst of grief was as fruitless as his threats of vengeance; a feigned submission of the conquerors completed the royal humiliation, and the barons knelt before Edward in Westminster Hall to receive a pardon which seemed the deathblow of the royal power. But if

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Edward was powerless to conquer the baronage he could still by evading the observances of the Ordinances throw the whole realm into confusion. The two years that follow Gaveston's death are among the darkest in our history. A terrible succession of famines intensified the suffering which sprang from the utter absence of all rule as dissension raged between the barons and the King. At last a common peril drew both parties together. The Scots had profited by the English troubles, and Bruce's "harrying of Buchan" after his defeat of its Earl, who had joined the English army, fairly turned the tide of success in his favour. Edinburgh, Roxburgh, Perth, and most of the Scotch fortresses fell one by one into King Robert's hands. The clergy met in council and owned him as their lawful lord. Gradually the Scotch barons who still held to the English cause were coerced into submission, and Bruce found himself strong enough to invest Stirling, the last and the most important of the Scotch fortresses which held out for Edward. Stirling was in fact the key of Scotland, and its danger roused England out of its civil strife to an effort for the recovery of its prey. At the close of 1313 Edward recognized the Ordinances, and a liberal grant from the Parliament enabled him to take the field. Lancaster indeed still held aloof on the ground that the King had not sought the assent of Parliament to the war, but thirty thousand men followed Edward to the North, and a host of wild marauders were summoned from Ireland and Wales. The army which Bruce gathered to oppose this inroad was formed almost wholly of footmen, and was stationed to the south of Stirling on a rising ground flanked by a little brook, the Bannockburn, which gave its name to the engagement. The battle took place on the twenty-fourth of June 1314. Again two systems of warfare were brought face to face as they had been brought at Falkirk, for Robert like Wallace drew up his forces in hollow squares or circles of spearmen. The English were dispirited at the very outset by the failure of an attempt

to relieve Stirling and by the issue of a single combat between Bruce and Henry de Bohun, a knight who bore down upon him as he was riding peacefully along the front of his army. Robert was mounted on a small hackney and held only a light battle-axe in his hand, but warding off his opponent's spear he cleft his skull with so terrible a blow that the handle of his axe was shattered in his grasp. At the opening of the battle the English archers were thrown forward to rake the Scottish squares, but they were without support and were easily dispersed by a handful of horse whom Bruce held in reserve for the purpose. The body of men-at-arms next flung themselves on the Scottish front, but their charge was embarrassed by the narrow space along which the line was forced to move, and the steady resistance of the squares soon threw the knighthood into disorder. "The horses that were stickit," says an exulting Scotch writer, "rushed and reeled right rudely." In the moment of failure the sight of a body of camp-followers, whom they mistook for reinforcements to the enemy, spread panic through the English host. It broke in a headlong rout. Its thousands of brilliant horsemen were soon floundering in pits which guarded the level ground to Bruce's left, or riding in wild haste for the border. Few however were fortunate enough to reach it. Edward himself, with a body of five hundred knights, succeeded in escaping to Dunbar and the sea. But the flower of his knighthood fell into the hands of the victors, while the Irishry and the footmen were ruthlessly cut down by the country folk as they fled. For centuries to come the rich plunder of the English camp left its traces on the treasure-rolls and the vestment-rolls of castle and abbey throughout the Lowlands.

Fall of Lancaster

Bannockburn left Bruce the master of Scotland: but terrible as the blow was England could not humble herself to relinquish her claim on the Scottish crown. Edward was eager indeed for a truce, but with equal firmness

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Bruce refused all negotiation while the royal title was withheld from him and steadily pushed on the recovery of his southern dominions. His progress was unhindered. Bannockburn left Edward powerless, and Lancaster at the head of the Ordainers became supreme. But it was still impossible to trust the King or to act with him, and in the dead-lock of both parties the Scots plundered as they would. Their ravages in the North brought shame on England such as it had never known. At last Bruce's capture of Berwick in the spring of 1318 forced the King to give way. The Ordinances were formally accepted, an amnesty granted, and a small number of peers belonging to the barons' party added to the great officers of state. Had a statesman been at the head of the baronage the weakness of Edward might have now been turned to good purpose. But the character of the Earl of Lancaster seems to have fallen far beneath the greatness of his position. Distrustful of his cousin, yet himself incapable of governing, he stood sullenly aloof from the royal Council and the royal armies, and Edward was able to lay his failure in recovering Berwick during the campaign of 1319 to the Earl's charge. His influence over the country was sensibly weakened; and in this weakness the new advisers on whom the King was leaning saw a hope of destroying his power. These were a younger and elder Hugh Le Despenser, son and grandson of the Justiciar who had fallen beside Earl Simon at Evesham. Greedy and ambitious as they may have been, they were able men, and their policy was of a higher stamp than the wilful defiance of Gaveston. It lay, if we may gather it from the faint indications which remain, in a frank recognition of the power of the three Estates as opposed to the separate action of the baronage. The rise of the younger Hugh, on whom the King bestowed the county of Glamorgan with the hand of one of its coheiresses, a daughter of Earl Gilbert of Gloucester, was rapid enough to excite general jealousy; and in 1321 Lancaster found little difficulty in extorting by force of

arms his exile from the kingdom. But the tide of popular sympathy was already wavering, and it was turned to the royal cause by an insult offered to the Queen, against whom Lady Badlesmere closed the doors of Ledes Castle. The unexpected energy shown by Edward in avenging this insult gave fresh strength to his cause. At the opening of 1322 he found himself strong enough to recall Despenser, and when Lancaster convoked the baronage to force him again into exile the weakness of their party was shown by some negotiations into which the Earl entered with the Scots and by his precipitate retreat to the north on the advance of the royal army. At Boroughbridge his forces were arrested and dispersed, and Thomas himself, brought captive before Edward at Pontefract, was tried and condemned to death as a traitor. "Have mercy on me, King of Heaven," cried Lancaster, as, mounted on a grey pony without a bridle, he was hurried to execution, "for my earthly King has forsaken me." His death was followed by that of a number of his adherents and by the captivity of others; while a Parliament at York annulled the proceedings against the Despensers and repealed the Ordinances.

The Despensers.

It is to this Parliament however, and perhaps to the victorious confidence of the royalists, that we owe the famous provision which reveals the policy of the Despensers, the provision that all laws concerning "the estate of our Lord the King and his heirs or for the estate of the realm and the people shall be treated, accorded, and established in Parliaments by our Lord the King and by the consent of the prelates, earls, barons, and commonalty of the realm according as hath been hitherto accustomed." It would seem from the tenor of this remarkable enactment that much of the sudden revulsion of popular feeling had been owing to the assumption of all legislative action by the baronage alone. The same policy was seen in a reissue in the form of a royal Ordinance of some of the most beneficial provisions of the Ordinances which had been

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formally repealed. But the arrogance of the Despensers gave new offence; and the utter failure of a fresh campaign against Scotland again weakened the Crown. The barbarous forays in which the borderers under Earl Douglas were wasting Northumberland woke a general indignation; and a grant from the Parliament at York enabled Edward to march with a great army to the North. But Bruce as of old declined an engagement till the wasted Lowlands starved the invaders into a ruinous retreat. The failure forced England in the spring of 1323 to stoop to a truce for thirteen years, in the negotiation of which Bruce was suffered to take the royal title. We see in this act of the Despensers the first of a series of such attempts by which minister after minister strove to free the Crown from the bondage under which the war-pressure laid it to the growing power of Parliament; but it ended as these after attempts ended only in the ruin of the counsellors who planned it. The pride of the country had been roused by the struggle, and the humiliation of such a truce robbed the Crown of its temporary popularity. It led the way to the sudden catastrophe which closed this disastrous reign.

Isabella.

In his struggle with the Scots Edward, like his father, had been hampered not only by internal divisions but by the harassing intervention of France. The rising under Bruce had been backed by French aid as well as by a revival of the old quarrel over Guienne, and on the accession of Charles the Fourth in 1322 a demand of homage for Ponthieu and Gascony called Edward over sea. But the Despensers dared not let him quit the realm, and a fresh dispute as to the right of possession in the Agenois brought about the seizure of the bulk of Gascony by a sudden attack on the part of the French. The quarrel verged upon open war, and to close it Edward's Queen, Isabella, a sister of the French King, undertook in 1325 to revisit her home and bring about a treaty of peace between the two countries.

Isabella hated the Despensers; she was alienated from her husband; but hatred and alienation were as yet jealously concealed. At the close of the year the terms of peace seemed to be arranged; and though declining to cross the sea, Edward evaded the difficulty created by the demand for personal homage by investing his son with the Duchies of Aquitaine and Gascony, and despatching him to join his mother at Paris. The boy did homage to King Charles for the two Duchies, the question of the Agenois being reserved for legal decision, and Edward at once recalled his wife and son to England. Neither threats nor prayers however could induce either wife or child to return to his court. Roger Mortimer, the most powerful of the Marcher barons and a deadly foe to the Despensers, had taken refuge in France; and his influence over the Queen made her the centre of a vast conspiracy. With the young Edward in her hands she was able to procure soldiers from the Count of Hainault by promising her son's hand to his daughter; the Italian bankers supplied funds; and after a year's preparation the Queen set sail in the autumn of 1326. A secret conspiracy of the baronage was revealed when the primate and nobles hurried to her standard on her landing at Orwell. Deserted by all and repulsed by the citizens of London whose aid he implored, the King fled hastily to the west and embarked with the Despensers for Lundy Island, which Despenser had fortified as a possible refuge; but contrary winds flung him again on the Welsh coast, where he fell into the hands of Earl Henry of Lancaster, the brother of the Earl whom they had slain. The younger Despenser, who accompanied him, was at once hung on a gibbet fifty feet high, and the King placed in ward at Kenilworth till his fate could be decided by a Parliament summoned for that purpose at Westminster in January 1327.

Deposition of Edward.

The peers who assembled fearlessly revived the constitutional usage of the earlier English freedom, and

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asserted their right to depose a King who had proved himself unworthy to rule. Not a voice was raised in Edward's behalf, and only four prelates protested when the young Prince was proclaimed King by acclamation and presented as their sovereign to the multitudes without. The revolution took legal form in a bill which charged the captive monarch with indolence, incapacity, the loss of Scotland, the violation of his coronation oath and oppression of the Church and baronage; and on the approval of this it was resolved that the reign of Edward of Caernarvon had ceased and that the crown had passed to his son, Edward of Windsor. A deputation of the Parliament proceeded to Kenilworth to procure the assent of the discrowned King to his own deposition, and Edward "clad in a plain black gown" bowed quietly to his fate. Sir William Trussel at once addressed him in words which better than any other mark the nature of the step which the Parliament had taken. "I, William Trussel, proctor of the earls, barons, and others, having for this full and sufficient power, do render and give back to you, Edward, once King of England, the homage and fealty of the persons named in my procuracy; and acquit and discharge them thereof in the best manner that law and custom will give. And I now make protestation in their name that they will no longer be in your fealty and allegiance, nor claim to hold anything of you as king, but will account you hereafter as a private person, without any manner of royal dignity." A significant act followed these emphatic words. Sir Thomas Blount, the steward of the household, broke his staff of office, a ceremony used only at a king's death, and declared that all persons engaged in the royal service were discharged. The act of Blount was only an omen of the fate which awaited the miserable King. In the following September he was murdered in Berkeley Castle.

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CHAPTER II.

EDWARD THE THIRD.

1327—1347.

Estate of the Commons.

THE deposition of Edward the Second proclaimed to the world the power which the English Parliament had gained. In thirty years from their first assembly at Westminster the Estates had wrested from the Crown the last relic of arbitrary taxation, had forced on it new ministers and a new system of government, had claimed a right of confirming the choice of its councillors and of punishing their misconduct, and had established the principle that redress of grievances precedes a grant of supply. Nor had the time been less important in the internal growth of Parliament. Step by step the practical sense of the Houses themselves completed the work of Edward by bringing about change after change in its composition. The very division into a House of Lords and a House of Commons formed no part of the original plan of Edward the First; in the earlier Parliaments each of the four orders of clergy, barons, knights, and burgesses met, deliberated, and made their grants apart from each other. This isolation however of the Estates soon showed signs of breaking down. Though the clergy held steadily aloof from any real union with its fellow-orders, the knights of the shire were drawn by the similarity of their social position into a close connexion with the lords. They seem in fact to have been soon admitted by the baronage

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to an almost equal position with themselves, whether as legislators or counsellors of the Crown. The burgesses on the other hand took little part at first in Parliamentary proceedings, save in those which related to the taxation of their class. But their position was raised by the strifes of the reign of Edward the Second when their aid was needed by the baronage in its struggle with the Crown; and their right to share fully in all legislative action was asserted in the statute of 1322. From this moment no proceedings can have been considered as formally legislative save those conducted in full Parliament of all the estates. In subjects of public policy however the barons were still regarded as the sole advisers of the Crown, though the knights of the shire were sometimes consulted with them. But the barons and knighthood were not fated to be drawn into a single body whose weight would have given an aristocratic impress to the constitution. Gradually, through causes with which we are imperfectly acquainted, the knights of the shire drifted from their older connexion with the baronage into so close and intimate a union with the representatives of the towns that at the opening of the reign of Edward the Third the two orders are found grouped formally together, under the name of "The Commons." It is difficult to over-estimate the importance of this change. Had Parliament remained broken up into its four orders of clergy, barons, knights, and citizens, its power would have been neutralized at every great crisis by the jealousies and difficulty of co-operation among its component parts. A permanent union of the knighthood and the baronage on the other hand would have converted Parliament into the mere representative of an aristocratic caste, and would have robbed it of the strength which it has drawn from its connexion with the great body of the commercial classes. The new attitude of the knighthood, their social connexion as landed gentry with the baronage, their political union with the burgesses, really welded the three orders into one, and gave that unity of feeling and

action to our Parliament on which its power has ever since mainly depended.

The weight of the two Houses was seen in their settlement of the new government by the nomination of a Council with Earl Henry of Lancaster at its head. The Council had at once to meet fresh difficulties in the North. The truce so recently made ceased legally with Edward's deposition; and the withdrawal of his royal title in further offers of peace warned Bruce of the new temper of the English rulers. Troops gathered on either side, and the English Council sought to pave the way for an attack by dividing Scotland against itself. Edward Balliol, a son of the former King John, was solemnly received as a vassal-king of Scotland at the English court. Robert was disabled by leprosy from taking the field in person, but the insult roused him to hurl his marauders again over the border under Douglas and Sir Thomas Randolph. The Scotch army has been painted for us by an eye-witness whose description is embodied in the work of Jehan le Bel. "It consisted of four thousand men-at-arms, knights, and esquires, well mounted, besides twenty thousand men bold and hardy, armed after the manner of their country, and mounted upon little hackneys that are never tied up or dressed, but turned immediately after the day's march to pasture on the heath or in the fields. . . They bring no carriages with them on account of the mountains they have to pass in Northumberland, neither do they carry with them any provisions of bread or wine, for their habits of sobriety are such in time of war that they will live for a long time on flesh half-sodden without bread, and drink the river water without wine. They have therefore no occasion for pots or pans, for they dress the flesh of the cattle in their skins after they have flayed them, and being sure to find plenty of them in the country which they invade they carry none with them. Under the flaps of his saddle each man carries a broad piece of metal, behind him a little bag of oatmeal:

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when they have eaten too much of the sodden flesh and their stomach appears weak and empty, they set this plate over the fire, knead the meal with water, and when the plate is hot put a little of the paste upon it in a thin cake like a biscuit, which they eat to warm their stomachs. It is therefore no wonder that they perform a longer day's march than other soldiers." Though twenty thousand horsemen and forty thousand foot marched under their boy-king to protect the border, the English troops were utterly helpless against such a foe as this. At one time the whole army lost its way in the border wastes; at another all traces of the enemy disappeared, and an offer of knighthood and a hundred marks was made to any who could tell where the Scots were encamped. But when they were found their position behind the Wear proved unassailable, and after a bold sally on the English camp Douglas foiled an attempt at intercepting him by a clever retreat. The English levies broke hopelessly up, and a fresh foray into Northumberland forced the English Court in 1328 to submit to peace. By the treaty of Northampton which was solemnly confirmed by Parliament in September the independence of Scotland was recognized, and Robert Bruce owned as its King. Edward formally abandoned his claim of feudal superiority over Scotland; while Bruce promised to make compensation for the damage done in the North, to marry his son David to Edward's sister Joan, and to restore their forfeited estates to those nobles who had sided with the English King.

Fall of Mortimer.

But the pride of England had been too much roused by the struggle with the Scots to bear this defeat easily, and the first result of the treaty of Northampton was the overthrow of the government which concluded it. This result was hastened by the pride of Roger Mortimer, who was now created Earl of March, and who had made himself supreme through his influence over Isabella and his exclusion of the rest of the nobles from all practical

share in the administration of the realm. The first efforts to shake Roger's power were unsuccessful. The Earl of Lancaster stood, like his brother, at the head of the baronage; the parliamentary settlement at Edward's accession had placed him first in the royal Council; and it was to him that the task of defying Mortimer naturally fell. At the close of 1328 therefore Earl Henry formed a league with the Archbishop of Canterbury and with the young King's uncles, the Earls of Norfolk and Kent, to bring Mortimer to account for the peace with Scotland and the usurpation of the government as well as for the late King's murder, a murder which had been the work of his private partizans and which had profoundly shocked the general conscience. But the young King clave firmly to his mother, the Earls of Norfolk and Kent deserted to Mortimer, and powerful as it seemed the league broke up without result. A feeling of insecurity however spurred the Earl of March to a bold stroke at his opponents. The Earl of Kent, who was persuaded that his brother, Edward the Second, still lived a prisoner in Corfe Castle, was arrested on a charge of conspiracy to restore him to the throne, tried before a Parliament filled with Mortimer's adherents, and sent to the block. But the death of a prince of the royal blood roused the young King to resentment at the greed and arrogance of a minister who treated Edward himself as little more than a state-prisoner. A few months after his uncle's execution the King entered the Council chamber in Nottingham Castle with a force which he had introduced through a secret passage in the rock on which it stands, and arrested Mortimer with his own hands. A Parliament which was at once summoned condemned the Earl of March to a traitor's death, and in November 1330 he was beheaded at Tyburn, while the Queen-mother was sent for the rest of her life into confinement at Castle Rising.

Young as he was, and he had only reached his

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Edward and France.

eighteenth year, Edward at once assumed the control of affairs. His first care was to restore good order throughout the country, which under the late government had fallen into ruin, and to free his hands by a peace with France for further enterprizes in the North. A formal peace had been concluded by Isabella after her husband's fall; but the death of Charles the Fourth soon brought about new jealousies between the two courts. The three sons of Philip the Fair had followed him on the throne in succession, but all had now died without male issue, and Isabella, as Philip's daughter, claimed the crown for her son. The claim in any case was a hard one to make out. Though her brothers had left no sons, they had left daughters, and if female succession were admitted these daughters of Philip's sons would precede a son of Philip's daughter. Isabella met this difficulty by a contention that though females could transmit the right of succession they could not themselves possess it, and that her son, as the nearest living male descendant of Philip the Fair, and born in the lifetime of the King from whom he claimed, could claim in preference to females who were related to Philip in as near a degree. But the bulk of French jurists asserted that only male succession gave right to the French throne. On such a theory the right inheritable from Philip the Fair was exhausted; and the crown passed to the son of Philip's younger brother, Charles of Valois, who in fact peacefully mounted the throne as Philip the Fifth. Purely formal as the claim which Isabella advanced seems to have been, it revived the irritation between the two courts, and though Edward's obedience to a summons which Philip addressed to him to do homage for Aquitaine brought about an agreement that both parties should restore the gains they had made since the last treaty the agreement was never carried out. Fresh threats of war ended in the conclusion of a new treaty of peace, but the question whether liege or simple homage was due for the duchies remained unsettled when the fall of Mortimer gave the

young King full mastery of affairs. His action was rapid and decisive. Clad as a merchant, and with but fifteen horsemen at his back, Edward suddenly made his appearance in 1331 at the French court and did homage as fully as Philip required. The question of the Agenois remained unsettled, though the English Parliament insisted that its decision should rest with negotiation and not with war, but on all other points a complete peace was made; and the young King rode back with his hands free for an attack which he was planning on the North.

New Scotch War.

The provisions of the Treaty of Northampton for the restitution of estates had never been fully carried out. Till this was done the English court held that the rights of feudal superiority over Scotland which it had yielded in the treaty remained in force; and at this moment an opening seemed to present itself for again asserting these rights with success. Fortune seemed at last to have veered to the English side. The death of Robert Bruce only a year after the Treaty of Northampton left the Scottish throne to his son David, a child of but eight years old. The death of the King was followed by the loss of Randolph and Douglas; and the internal difficulties of the realm broke out in civil strife. To the great barons on either side the border the late peace involved serious losses, for many of the Scotch houses held large estates in England as many of the English lords held large estates in Scotland, and although the treaty had provided for their claims they had in each case been practically set aside. It is this discontent of the barons at the new settlement which explains the sudden success of Edward Balliol in a snatch which he made at the Scottish throne. Balliol's design was known at the English court, where he had found shelter for some years; and Edward, whether sincerely or no, forbad his barons from joining him and posted troops on the border to hinder his crossing it. But Balliol found little difficulty in making his attack by sea. He sailed from England at the head of a body of nobles who claimed

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estates in the north, landed in August 1332 on the shores of Fife, and after repulsing with immense loss an army which attacked him near Perth was crowned at Scone two months after his landing, while David Bruce fled helplessly to France. Edward had given no open aid to this enterprize, but the crisis tempted his ambition, and he demanded and obtained from Balliol an acknowledgement of the English suzerainty. The acknowledgement however was fatal to Balliol himself. Surprized at Annan by a party of Scottish nobles, their sudden attack drove him in December over the border after a reign of but five months; and Berwick, which he had agreed to surrender to Edward, was strongly garrisoned against an English attack. The sudden breakdown of his vassal-king left Edward face to face with a new Scotch war. The Parliament which he summoned to advise on the enforcement of his claim showed no wish to plunge again into the contest and met him only with evasions and delays. But Edward had gone too far to withdraw. In March 1333 he appeared before Berwick, and besieged the town. A Scotch army under the regent, Sir Archibald Douglas, brother to the famous Sir James, advanced to its relief in July and attacked a covering force which was encamped on the strong position of Halidon Hill. The English bowmen however vindicated the fame they had first won at Falkirk and were soon to crown in the victory of Creçy. The Scotch only struggled through the marsh which covered the English front to be riddled with a storm of arrows and to break in utter rout. The battle decided the fate of Berwick. From that time the town has remained English territory. It was in fact the one part of Edward's conquests which was preserved in the end by the English crown. But fragment as it was, it was always viewed legally as representing the realm of which it once formed a part. As Scotland, it had its chancellor, chamberlain, and other officers of State: and the peculiar heading of Acts of Parliament enacted for England "and the town of

Berwick-upon-Tweed" still preserves the memory of its peculiar position. But the victory did more than give Berwick to England. The defeat of Douglas was followed by the submission of a large part of the Scotch nobles, by the flight of the boy-king David, and by the return of Balliol unopposed to the throne. Edward exacted a heavy price for his aid. All Scotland south of the Firth of Forth was ceded to England, and Balliol did homage as vassal-king for the rest.

Scotland freed.

It was at the moment of this submission that the young King reached the climax of his success. A king at fourteen, a father at seventeen, he had carried out at eighteen a political revolution in the overthrow of Mortimer, and restored at twenty-two the ruined work of his grandfather. The northern frontier was carried to its old line under the Northumbrian kings. His kingdom within was peaceful and orderly; and the strife with France seemed at an end. During the next three years Edward persisted in the line of policy he had adopted, retaining his hold over Southern Scotland, aiding his sub-king Balliol in campaign after campaign against the despairing efforts of the nobles who still adhered to the house of Bruce, a party who were now headed by Robert the Steward of Scotland and by Earl Randolph of Moray. His perseverance was all but crowned with success, when Scotland was again saved by the intervention of France. The successes of Edward roused anew the jealousy of the French court. David Bruce found a refuge with Philip; French ships appeared off the Scotch coast and brought aid to the patriot nobles; and the old legal questions about the Agenois and Aquitaine were mooted afresh by the French council. For a time Edward staved off the contest by repeated embassies; but his refusal to accept Philip as a mediator between England and the Scots stirred France to threats of war. In 1335 fleets gathered on its coast; descents were made on the English shores; and troops and galleys were hired in Italy and the north for an invasion

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of England. The mere threat of war saved Scotland. Edward's forces there were drawn to the south to meet the looked for attack from across the Channel; and the patriot party freed from their pressure at once drew together again. The actual declaration of war against France at the close of 1337 was the knell of Balliol's greatness; he found himself without an adherent and withdrew two years later to the court of Edward, while David returned to his kingdom in 1342 and won back the chief fastnesses of the Lowlands. From that moment the freedom of Scotland was secured. From a war of conquest and patriotic resistance the struggle died into a petty strife between two angry neighbours, which became a mere episode in the larger contest which it had stirred between England and France.

The Hundred Years' War.

Whether in its national or in its European bearings it is difficult to over-estimate the importance of the contest which was now to open between these two nations. To England it brought a social, a religious, and in the end a political revolution. The Peasant Revolt, Lollardry, and the New Monarchy were direct issues of the Hundred Years' War. With it began the military renown of England; with it opened her struggle for the mastery of the seas. The pride begotten by great victories and a sudden revelation of warlike prowess roused the country not only to a new ambition, a new resolve to assert itself as a European power, but to a repudiation of the claims of the Papacy and an assertion of the ecclesiastical independence both of Church and Crown which paved the way for and gave its ultimate form to the English Reformation. The peculiar shape which English warfare assumed, the triumph of the yeoman and archer over noble and knight, gave new force to the political advance of the Commons. On the other hand the misery of the war produced the first great open feud between labour and capital. The glory of Creçy or Poitiers was dearly bought by the upgrowth of English pauperism. The warlike temper nursed

on foreign fields begot at home a new turbulence and scorn of law, woke a new feudal spirit in the baronage, and sowed in the revolution which placed a new house on the throne the seeds of that fatal strife over the succession which troubled England to the days of Elizabeth. Nor was the contest of less import in the history of France. If it struck her for the moment from her height of pride, it raised her in the end to the front rank among the states of Europe. It carried her boundaries to the Rhone and the Pyrenees. It wrecked alike the feudal power of her *noblesse* and the hopes of constitutional liberty which might have sprung from the emancipation of the peasant or the action of the burgher. It founded a royal despotism which reached its height in Richelieu and finally plunged France into the gulf of the Revolution.

The Imperial Alliance.

Of these mighty issues little could be foreseen at the moment when Philip and Edward declared war. But from the very first the war took European dimensions. The young King saw clearly the greater strength of France. The weakness of the Empire, the captivity of the Papacy at Avignon, left her without a rival among European powers. The French chivalry was the envy of the world, and its military fame had just been heightened by a victory over the Flemish communes at Cassel. In numbers, in wealth, the French people far surpassed their neighbours over the Channel. England can hardly have counted more than four millions of inhabitants, France boasted of twenty. The clinging of our kings to their foreign dominions is explained by the fact that their subjects in Gascony, Aquitaine, and Poitou must have equalled in number their subjects in England. There was the same disproportion in the wealth of the two countries and, as men held then, in their military resources. Edward could bring only eight thousand men-at-arms to the field. Philip, while a third of his force was busy elsewhere, could appear at the head of forty thousand. Of the revolution in warfare which was to

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reverse this superiority, to make the footman rather than the horseman the strength of an army, the world and even the English King, in spite of Falkirk and Halidon, as yet recked little. Edward's whole energy was bent on meeting the strength of France by a coalition of powers against her, and his plans were helped by the dread which the great feudatories of the empire who lay nearest to him, the Duke of Brabant, the Counts of Hainault and Gelders, the Markgrave of Juliers, felt of French annexation. They listened willingly enough to his offers. Sixty thousand crowns purchased the alliance of Brabant. Lesser subsidies bought that of the two counts and the Markgrave. The King's work was helped indeed by his domestic relations. The Count of Hainault was Edward's father-in-law; he was also the father-in-law of the Count of Gelders. But the marriage of a third of the Count's daughters brought the English King a more important ally. She was wedded to the Emperor, Lewis of Bavaria, and the connexion that thus existed between the English and Imperial Courts facilitated the negotiations which ended in a formal alliance.

Its Relation to the Papacy.

But the league had a more solid ground. The Emperor, like Edward, had his strife with France. His strife sprang from the new position of the Papacy. The removal of the Popes to Avignon which followed on the quarrel of Boniface the Eighth with Philip le Bel and the subjection to the French court which resulted from it affected the whole state of European politics. In the ever-recurring contest between the Papacy and the Empire France had of old been the lieutenant of the Roman See. But with the settlement at Avignon the relation changed, and the Pope became the lieutenant of France. Instead of the Papacy using the French Kings in its war of ideas against the Empire the French Kings used the Papacy as an instrument in their political rivalry with the Emperors. But if the position of the Pope drew Lewis to the side of England, it had much to do with drawing Edward to the side of

Lewis. It was this that made the alliance, fruitless as it proved in a military sense, so memorable in its religious results. Hitherto England had been mainly on the side of the Popes in their strife against the Emperors. Now that the Pope had become a tool in the hands of a power which was to be its great enemy, the country was driven to close alliances with the Empire and to an ever-growing alienation from the Roman See. In Scotch affairs the hostility of the Popes had been steady and vexatious ever since Edward the First's time, and from the moment that this fresh struggle commenced they again showed their French partizanship. When Lewis made a last appeal for peace, Philip of Valois made Benedict XII. lay down as a condition that the Emperor should form no alliance with an enemy of France. The quarrel of both England and Germany with the Papacy at once grew ripe. The German Diet met to declare that the Imperial power came from God alone, and that the choice of an Emperor needed no Papal confirmation, while Benedict replied by a formal excommunication of Lewis. England on the other hand entered on a religious revolution when she stood hand in hand with an excommunicated power. It was significant that though worship ceased in Flanders on the Pope's interdict, the English priests who were brought over set the interdict at nought.

Failure of the Alliance.

The negotiation of this alliance occupied the whole of 1337; it ended in a promise of the Emperor on payment of 3,000 gold florins to furnish two thousand men at arms. In the opening of 1338 an attack of Philip on the Agenois forced Edward into open war. His profuse expenditure however brought little fruit. Though Edward crossed to Antwerp in the summer, the year was spent in negotiations with the princes of the Lower Rhine and in an interview with the Emperor at Coblentz, where Lewis appointed him Vicar-General of the Emperor for all territories on the left bank of the Rhine. The occupation of Cambray, an Imperial fief, by the French King gave a

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formal ground for calling the princes of this district to Edward's standard. But already the great alliance showed signs of yielding. Edward, uneasy at his connexion with an Emperor under the ban of the Church and harassed by vehement remonstrances from the Pope, entered again into negotiations with France in the winter of 1338; and Lewis, alarmed in his turn, listened to fresh overtures from Benedict, who held out vague hopes of reconciliation while he threatened a renewed excommunication if Lewis persisted in invading France. The non-arrival of the English subsidy decided the Emperor to take no personal part in the war, and the attitude of Lewis told on the temper of Edward's German allies. Though all joined him in the summer of 1339 on his formal summons of them as Vicar-General of the Empire, and his army when it appeared before Cambray numbered forty thousand men, their ardour cooled as the town held out. Philip approached it from the south, and on Edward's announcing his resolve to cross the river and attack him he was at once deserted by the two border princes who had most to lose from a contest with France, the Counts of Hainault and Namur. But the King was still full of hope. He pushed forward to the country round St. Quentin between the head waters of the Somme and the Oise with the purpose of forcing a decisive engagement. But he found Philip strongly encamped, and declaring their supplies exhausted his allies at once called for a retreat. It was in vain that Edward moved slowly for a week along the French border. Philip's position was too strongly guarded by marshes and entrenchments to be attacked, and at last the allies would stay no longer. At the news that the French King had withdrawn to the south the whole army in turn fell back upon Brussels.

England and the Papacy.

The failure of the campaign dispelled the hopes which Edward had drawn from his alliance with the Empire. With the exhaustion of his subsidies the princes of the Low Countries became inactive. The Duke of Brabant became cooler in his friendship. The Emperor himself,

still looking to an accommodation with the Pope and justly jealous of Edward's own intrigues at Avignon, wavered and at last fell away. But though the alliance ended in disappointment it had given a new impulse to the grudge against the Papacy which began with its extortions in the reign of Henry the Third. The hold of Rome on the loyalty of England was sensibly weakening. Their transfer from the Eternal City to Avignon robbed the Popes of half the awe which they had inspired among Englishmen. Not only did it bring them nearer and more into the light of common day, but it dwarfed them into mere agents of French policy. The old bitterness at their exactions was revived by the greed to which they were driven through their costly efforts to impose a French and Papal Emperor on Germany as well as to secure themselves in their new capital on the Rhone. The mighty building, half fortress, half palace, which still awes the traveller at Avignon has played its part in our history. Its erection was to the rise of Lollardry what the erection of St. Peter's was to the rise of Lutheranism. Its massive walls, its stately chapel, its chambers glowing with the frescoes of Simone Memmi, the garden which covered its roof with a strange verdure, called year by year for fresh supplies of gold; and for this as for the wider and costlier schemes of Papal policy gold could be got only by pressing harder and harder on the national churches the worst claims of the Papal court, by demands of first-fruits and annates from rectory and bishoprick, by pretensions to the right of bestowing all benefices which were in ecclesiastical patronage and by the sale of these presentations, by the direct taxation of the clergy, by the intrusion of foreign priests into English livings, by opening a mart for the disposal of pardons, dispensations, and indulgences, and by encouraging appeals from every ecclesiastical jurisdiction to the Papal court. No grievance was more bitterly felt than this grievance of appeals. Cases of the most trifling importance were called for decision out of the realm to a

tribunal whose delays were proverbial and whose fees were enormous. The envoy of an Oxford College which sought only a formal licence to turn a vicarage into a rectory had not only to bear the expense and toil of a journey which then occupied some eighteen days but was kept dangling at Avignon for three-and-twenty weeks. Humiliating and vexatious however as these appeals were, they were but one among the means of extortion which the Papal court multiplied as its needs grew greater. The protest of a later Parliament, exaggerated as its statements no doubt are, shows the extent of the national irritation, if not of the grievances which produced it. It asserted that the taxes levied by the Pope amounted to five times the amount of those levied by the king; that by reservations during the life of actual holders the Pope disposed of the same bishoprick four or five times over, receiving each time the first-fruits. "The brokers of the sinful city of Rome promote for money unlearned and unworthy caitiffs to benefices to the value of a thousand marks, while the poor and learned hardly obtain one of twenty. So decays sound learning. They present aliens who neither see nor care to see their parishioners, despise God's services, convey away the treasure of the realm, and are worse than Jews or Saracens. The Pope's revenue from England alone is larger than that of any prince in Christendom. God gave his sheep to be pastured, not to be shaven and shorn." At the close of this reign indeed the deaneries of Lichfield, Salisbury, and York, the archdeaconry of Canterbury, which was reputed the wealthiest English benefice, together with a host of prebends and preferments, were held by Italian cardinals and priests, while the Pope's collector from his office in London sent twenty thousand marks a year to the Papal treasury.

Protest of the Parliament.

But the greed of the Popes was no new grievance, though the increase of these exactions since the removal to Avignon gave it a new force. What alienated England

most was their connexion with and dependence on France. From the first outset of the troubles in the North their attitude had been one of hostility to the English projects. France was too useful a supporter of the Papal court to find much difficulty in inducing it to aid in hampering the growth of English greatness. Boniface the Eighth released Balliol from his oath of fealty, and forbad Edward to attack Scotland on the ground that it was a fief of the Roman see. His intervention was met by a solemn and emphatic protest from the English Parliament; but it none the less formed a terrible obstacle in Edward's way. The obstacle was at last removed by the quarrel of Boniface with Philip the Fair; but the end of this quarrel only threw the Papacy more completely into the hands of France. Though Avignon remained imperial soil, the removal of the Popes to this city on the verge of their dominions made them mere tools of the French Kings. Much no doubt of the endless negotiation which the Papal court carried on with Edward the Third in his strife with Philip of Valois was an honest struggle for peace. But to England it seemed the mere interference of a dependent on behalf of "our enemy of France." The people scorned a "French Pope," and threatened Papal legates with stoning when they landed on English shores. The alliance of Edward with an excommunicated Emperor, the bold defiance with which English priests said mass in Flanders when an interdict reduced the Flemish priests to silence, were significant tokens of the new attitude which England was taking up in the face of Popes who were leagued with its enemy. The old quarrel over ecclesiastical wrongs was renewed in a formal and decisive way. In 1343 the Commons petitioned for the redress of the grievance of Papal appointments to vacant livings in despite of the rights of patrons or the Crown; and Edward formally complained to the Pope of his appointing "foreigners, most of them suspicious persons, who do not reside on their benefices, who do not know the faces

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of the flocks entrusted to them, who do not understand their language, but, neglecting the cure of souls, seek as hirelings only their worldly hire." In yet sharper words the King rebuked the Papal greed. "The successor of the Apostles was set over the Lord's sheep to feed and not to shear them." The Parliament declared "that they neither could nor would tolerate such things any longer;" and the general irritation moved slowly towards those statutes of Provisors and Praemunire which heralded the policy of Henry the Eighth.

Flanders.

But for the moment the strife with the Papacy was set aside in the efforts which were needed for a new struggle with France. The campaign of 1339 had not only ended in failure, it had dispelled the trust of Edward in an Imperial alliance. But as this hope faded away a fresh hope dawned on the King from another quarter. Flanders, still bleeding from the defeat of its burghers by the French knighthood, was his natural ally. England was the great wool-producing country of the west, but few woollen fabrics were woven in England. The number of weavers' gilds shows that the trade was gradually extending, and at the very outset of his reign Edward had taken steps for its encouragement. He invited Flemish weavers to settle in his country, and took the new immigrants, who chose the eastern counties for the seat of their trade, under his royal protection. But English manufactures were still in their infancy and nine-tenths of the English wool went to the looms of Bruges or of Ghent. We may see the rapid growth of this export trade in the fact that the King received in a single year more than £30,000 from duties levied on wool alone. The wool-sack which forms the Chancellor's seat in the House of Lords is said to witness to the importance which the government attached to this new source of wealth. A stoppage of this export threw half the population of the great Flemish towns out of work, and the irritation caused in Flanders by the interruption which this trade sustained

through the piracies that Philip's ships were carrying on in the Channel showed how effective the threat of such a stoppage would be in securing their alliance. Nor was this the only ground for hoping for aid from the Flemish towns. Their democratic spirit jostled roughly with the feudalism of France. If their counts clung to the French monarchy, the towns themselves, proud of their immense population, their thriving industry, their vast wealth, drew more and more to independence. Jacques van Arteveldt, a great brewer of Ghent, wielded the chief influence in their councils, and his aim was to build up a confederacy which might hold France in check along her northern border.

The Flemish Alliance.

His plans had as yet brought no help from the Flemish towns, but at the close of 1339 they set aside their neutrality for open aid. The great plan of Federation which Van Arteveldt had been devising as a check on the aggression of France was carried out in a treaty concluded between Edward, the Duke of Brabant, the cities of Brussels, Antwerp, Louvain, Ghent, Bruges, Ypres, and seven others. By this remarkable treaty it was provided that war should be begun and ended only by mutual consent, free commerce be encouraged between Flanders and Brabant, and no change made in their commercial arrangements save with the consent of the whole league. By a subsequent treaty the Flemish towns owned Edward as King of France, and declared war against Philip of Valois. But their voice was decisive on the course of the campaign which opened in 1340. As Philip held the Upper Scheldt by the occupation of Cambray, so he held the Lower Scheldt by that of Tournay, a fortress which broke the line of commerce between Flanders and Brabant. It was a condition of the Flemish alliance therefore that the war should open with the capture of Tournay. It was only at the cost of a fight however that Edward could now cross the Channel to undertake the siege. France was as superior in force at sea as on

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land; and a fleet of two hundred vessels gathered at Sluys to intercept him. But the fine seamanship of the English sailors justified the courage of their King in attacking this fleet with far smaller forces; the French ships were utterly destroyed and twenty thousand Frenchmen slain in the encounter. It was with the lustre of this great victory about him that Edward marched upon Tournay. Its siege however proved as fruitless as that of Cambray in the preceding year, and after two months of investment his vast army of one hundred thousand men broke up without either capturing the town or bringing Philip when he approached it to an engagement. Want of money forced Edward to a truce for a year, and he returned beggared and embittered to England.

Edward's distress.

He had been worsted in war as in diplomacy. One naval victory alone redeemed years of failure and expense. Guienne was all but lost, England was suffering from the terrible taxation, from the ruin of commerce, from the ravages of her coast. Five years of constant reverses were hard blows for a King of twenty-eight who had been glorious and successful at twenty-three. His financial difficulties indeed were enormous. It was in vain that, availing himself of an Act which forbad the exportation of wool "till by the King and his Council it is otherwise provided," he turned for the time the wool-trade into a royal monopoly and became the sole wool exporter, buying at £3 and selling at £20 the sack. The campaign of 1339 brought with it a crushing debt: that of 1340 proved yet more costly. Edward attributed his failure to the slackness of his ministers in sending money and supplies, and this to their silent opposition to the war. But wroth as he was on his return, a short struggle between the ministers and the King ended in a reconciliation, and preparations for renewed hostilities went on. Abroad indeed nothing could be done. The Emperor finally withdrew from Edward's friendship. A new Pope, Clement the Sixth, proved even more French in sentiment than his prede-

cessor. Flanders alone held true of all England's foreign allies. Edward was powerless to attack Philip in the realm he claimed for his own; what strength he could gather was needed to prevent the utter ruin of the English cause in Scotland on the return of David Bruce. Edward's soldiers had been driven from the open country and confined to the fortresses of the Lowlands. Even these were at last reft away. Perth was taken by siege, and the King was too late to prevent the surrender of Stirling. Edinburgh was captured by a stratagem. Only Roxburgh and Berwick were saved by a truce which Edward was driven to conclude with the Scots.

Progress of Parliament.

But with the difficulties of the Crown the weight of the two Houses made itself more and more sensibly felt. The almost incessant warfare which had gone on since the accession of Edward the Third consolidated and developed the power which they had gained from the dissensions of his father's reign. The need of continual grants brought about an assembly of Parliament year by year, and the subsidies that were accorded to the King showed the potency of the financial engine which the Crown could now bring into play. In a single year the Parliament granted twenty thousand sacks, or half the wool of the realm. Two years later the Commons voted an aid of thirty thousand sacks. In 1339 the barons granted the tenth sheep and fleece and lamb. The clergy granted two tenths in one year, and a tenth for three years in the next. But with each supply some step was made to greater political influence. In his earlier years Edward showed no jealousy of the Parliament. His policy was to make the struggle with France a national one by winning for it the sympathy of the people at large; and with this view he not only published in the County Courts the efforts he had made for peace, but appealed again and again for the sanction and advice of Parliament in his enterprize. In 1331 he asked the Estates whether they would prefer negotiation or war: in 1338 he declared

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that his expedition to Flanders was made by the assent of the Lords and at the prayer of the Commons. The part of the last in public affairs grew greater in spite of their own efforts to remain obscure. From the opening of the reign a crowd of enactments for the regulation of trade, whether wise or unwise, shows the influence of the burgesses. But the final division of Parliament into two Houses, a change which was completed by 1341, necessarily increased the weight of the Commons. The humble trader who shrank from counselling the Crown in great matters of policy gathered courage as he found himself sitting side by side with the knights of the shire. It was at the moment when this great change was being brought about that the disasters of the war spurred the Parliament to greater activity. The enormous grants of 1340 were bought by the King's assent to statutes which provided remedies for grievances of which the Commons complained. The most important of these put an end to the attempts which Edward had made like his grandfather to deal with the merchant class apart from the Houses. No charges or aid was henceforth to be made save by the common assent of the Estates assembled in Parliament. The progress of the next year was yet more important. The strife of the King with his ministers, the foremost of whom was Archbishop Stratford, ended in the Primate's refusal to make answer to the royal charges save in full Parliament, and in the assent of the King to a resolution of the Lords that none of their number, whether ministers of the Crown or no, should be brought to trial elsewhere than before his peers. The Commons demanded and obtained the appointment of commissioners elected in Parliament to audit the grants already made. Finally it was enacted that at each Parliament the ministers should hold themselves accountable for all grievances; that on any vacancy the King should take counsel with his lords as to the choice of the new minister; and that, when chosen, each minister should be sworn in Parliament.

Close of the truce.

At the moment which we have reached therefore the position of the Parliament had become far more important than at Edward's accession. Its form was settled. The third estate had gained a fuller parliamentary power. The principle of ministerial responsibility to the Houses had been established by formal statute. But the jealousy of Edward was at last completely roused, and from this moment he looked on the new power as a rival to his own. The Parliament of 1341 had no sooner broken up than he revoked by Letters Patent the statutes it had passed as done in prejudice of his prerogative and only assented to for the time to prevent worse confusion. The regular assembly of the Estates was suddenly interrupted, and two years passed without a Parliament. It was only the continual presence of war which from this time drove Edward to summon the Houses at all. Though the truce still held good between England and France a quarrel of succession to the Duchy of Brittany which broke out in 1341 and called Philip to the support of one claimant, his cousin Charles of Blois, and Edward to the support of a rival claimant, John of Montfort, dragged on year after year. In Flanders things went ill for the English cause. The dissensions between the great and the smaller towns, and in the greater towns themselves between the weavers and fullers, dissensions which had taxed the genius of Van Arteveldt through the nine years of his wonderful rule, broke out in 1345 into a revolt at Ghent in which the great statesman was slain. With him fell a design for the deposition of the Count of Flanders and the reception of the Prince of Wales in his stead which he was ardently pressing, and whose political results might have been immense. Deputies were at once sent to England to excuse Van Arteveldt's murder and to promise loyalty to Edward; but the King's difficulties had now reached their height. His loans from the Florentine bankers amounted to half a million. His claim on the French crown found not a single adherent save among the

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burghers of the Flemish towns. The overtures which he made for peace were contemptuously rejected, and the expiration of the truce in 1345 found him again face to face with France.

Edward marches on Paris.

But it was perhaps this breakdown of all foreign hope that contributed to Edward's success in the fresh outbreak of war. The war opened in Guienne, and Henry of Lancaster, who was now known as the Earl of Derby, and who with the Hainaulter Sir Walter Maunay took the command in that quarter, at once showed the abilities of a great general. The course of the Garonne was cleared by his capture of La Reole and Aiguillon, that of the Dordogne by the reduction of Bergerac, and a way opened for the reconquest of Poitou by the capture of Angoulême. These unexpected successes roused Philip to strenuous efforts, and a hundred thousand men gathered under his son, John, Duke of Normandy, for the subjugation of the South. Angoulême was won back, and Aiguillon besieged when Edward sailed to the aid of his hard-pressed lieutenant. It was with an army of thirty thousand men, half English, half Irish and Welsh, that he commenced a march which was to change the whole face of the war. His aim was simple. Flanders was still true to Edward's cause, and while Derby was pressing on in the south a Flemish army besieged Bouvines and threatened France from the north. The King had at first proposed to land in Guienne and relieve the forces in the south; but suddenly changing his design he disembarked at La Hogue and advanced through Normandy. By this skilful movement Edward not only relieved Derby but threatened Paris, and left himself able to co-operate with either his own army in the south or the Flemings in the north. Normandy was totally without defence, and after the sack of Caen, which was then one of the wealthiest towns in France, Edward marched upon the Seine. His march threatened Rouen and Paris, and its strategical value was seen by the sudden panic of the French King. Philip was wholly taken by

surprize. He attempted to arrest Edward's march by an offer to restore the Duchy of Aquitaine as Edward the Second had held it, but the offer was fruitless. Philip was forced to call his son to the rescue. John at once raised the siege of Aiguillon, and the French army moved rapidly to the north, its withdrawal enabling Derby to capture Poitiers and make himself thorough master of the south. But John was too distant from Paris for his forces to avail Philip in his emergency, for Edward, finding the bridges on the Lower Seine broken, pushed straight on Paris, rebuilt the bridge of Poissy, and threatened the capital.

Crecy.

At this crisis however France found an unexpected help in a body of German knights. The long strife between Lewis of Bavaria and the Papacy had ended at last in Clement's carrying out his sentence of deposition by the nomination and coronation as emperor of Charles of Luxemburg, a son of King John of Bohemia, the well known Charles IV. of the Golden Bull. But against this Papal assumption of a right to bestow the German Crown Germany rose as one man. Not a town opened its gates to the Papal claimant, and driven to seek help and refuge from Philip of Valois he found himself at this moment on the eastern frontier of France with his father and 500 knights. Hurrying to Paris this German force formed the nucleus of an army which assembled at St. Denys; and which was soon reinforced by 15,000 Genoese cross-bowmen who had been hired from among the soldiers of the Lord of Monaco on the sunny Riviera and arrived at this hour of need. With this host rapidly gathering in his front Edward abandoned his march on Paris, which had already served its purpose in relieving Derby, and threw himself across the Seine to carry out the second part of his programme by a junction with the Flemings at Gravelines and a campaign in the north. But the rivers in his path were carefully guarded, and it was only by surprizing the ford of Blanche-Taque on the Somme that

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the King escaped the necessity of surrendering to the vast host which was now hastening in pursuit. His communications however were no sooner secured than he halted on the twenty-sixth of August at the little village of Creçy in Ponthieu and resolved to give battle. Half of his army, which had been greatly reduced in strength by his rapid marches, consisted of light-armed footmen from Ireland and Wales; the bulk of the remainder was composed of English bowmen. The King ordered his men-at-arms to dismount, and drew up his forces on a low rise sloping gently to the south-east, with a deep ditch covering its front, and its flanks protected by woods and a little brook. From a windmill on the summit of this rise Edward could overlook the whole field of battle. Immediately beneath him lay his reserve, while at the base of the slope was placed the main body of the army in two divisions, that to the right commanded by the young Prince of Wales, Edward "the Black Prince," as he was called, that to the left by the Earl of Northampton. A small ditch protected the English front, and behind it the bowmen were drawn up "in the form of a harrow" with small bombards between them "which with fire threw little iron balls to frighten the horses," the first instance known of the use of artillery in field-warfare.

The halt of the English army took Philip by surprize, and he attempted for a time to check the advance of his army. But the attempt was fruitless and the disorderly host rolled on to the English front. The sight of his enemies indeed stirred Philip's own blood to fury, "for he hated them." The fight began at vespers. The Genoese cross-bowmen were ordered to open the attack, but the men were weary with their march, a sudden storm wetted and rendered useless their bowstrings, and the loud shouts with which they leapt forward to the encounter were met with dogged silence in the English ranks. Their first arrow flight however brought a terrible reply. So rapid was the English shot "that it seemed as if it snowed."

"Kill me these scoundrels," shouted Philip, as the Genoese fell back; and his men-at-arms plunged butchering into their broken ranks while the Counts of Alençon and Flanders at the head of the French knighthood fell hotly on the Prince's line. For an instant his small force seemed lost, and he called his father to support him. But Edward refused to send him aid. "Is he dead, or unhorsed, or so wounded that he cannot help himself?" he asked the envoy. "No, sir," was the reply, "but he is in a hard passage of arms, and sorely needs your help." "Return to those that sent you," said the King, "and bid them not send to me again so long as my son lives! Let the boy win his spurs, for, if God so order it, I will that the day may be his and that the honour may be with him and them to whom I have given it in charge." Edward could see in fact from his higher ground that all went well. The English bowmen and men-at-arms held their ground stoutly while the Welshmen stabbed the French horses in the melly and brought knight after knight to the ground. Soon the French host was wavering in a fatal confusion. "You are my vassals, my friends," cried the blind John of Bohemia to the German nobles around him, "I pray and beseech you to lead me so far into the fight that I may strike one good blow with this sword of mine!" Linking their bridles together, the little company plunged into the thick of the combat to fall as their fellows were falling. The battle went steadily against the French. At last Philip himself hurried from the field, and the defeat became a rout. Twelve hundred knights and thirty thousand footmen—a number equal to the whole English force—lay dead upon the ground.

The Yeoman.

"God has punished us for our sins," cries the chronicler of St. Denys in a passion of bewildered grief as he tells the rout of the great host which he had seen mustering beneath his abbey walls. But the fall of France was hardly so sudden or so incomprehensible as the ruin at a single blow of a system of warfare, and with it of the

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political and social fabric which had risen out of that system. Feudalism rested on the superiority of the horseman to the footman, of the mounted noble to the unmounted churl. The real fighting power of a feudal army lay in its knighthood, in the baronage and landowners who took the field, each with his group of esquires and mounted men-at-arms. A host of footmen followed them, but they were ill-armed, ill-disciplined, and seldom called on to play any decisive part on the actual battle-field. In France, and especially at the moment we have reached, the contrast between the efficiency of these two elements of warfare was more striking than elsewhere. Nowhere was the chivalry so splendid, nowhere was the general misery and oppression of the poor more terribly expressed in the worthlessness of the mob of footmen who were driven by their lords to the camp. In England, on the other hand, the failure of feudalism to win a complete hold on the country was seen in the persistence of the older national institutions which based its defence on the general levy of its freemen. If the foreign Kings added to this a system of warlike organization grounded on the service due from its military tenants to the Crown, they were far from regarding this as superseding the national "fyrd." The Assize of Arms, the Statute of Winchester, show with what care the fyrd was held in a state of efficiency. Its force indeed as an engine of war was fast rising between the age of Henry the Second and that of Edward the Third. The social changes on which we have already dwelt, the facilities given to alienation and the subdivision of lands, the transition of the serf into a copyholder and of the copyholder by redemption of his services into a freeholder, the rise of a new class of "farmers" as the lords ceased to till their demesne by means of bailiffs and adopted the practise of leasing it at a rent or "farm" to one of the customary tenants, the general increase of wealth which was telling on the social position even of those who still remained in villenage, undid more and

more the earlier process which had degraded the free ceorl of the English Conquest into the villein of the Norman Conquest, and covered the land with a population of yeomen, some freeholders, some with services that every day became less weighty and already left them virtually free.

The Bow.

Such men, proud of their right to justice and an equal law, called by attendance in the county court to a share in the judicial, the financial, and the political life of the realm, were of a temper to make soldiers of a different sort from the wretched serfs who followed the feudal lords of the Continent; and they were equipped with a weapon which as they wielded it was enough of itself to make a revolution in the art of war. The bow, identified as it became with English warfare, was the weapon not of Englishmen but of their Norman conquerors. It was the Norman arrow-flight that decided the day of Senlac. But in the organization of the national army it had been assigned as the weapon of the poorer freeholders who were liable to serve at the King's summons; and we see how closely it had become associated with them in the picture of Chaucer's yeoman. "In his hand he bore a mighty bow." Its might lay not only in the range of the heavy war-shaft, a range we are told of four hundred yards, but in its force. The English archer, taught from very childhood "how to draw, how to lay his body to the bow," his skill quickened by incessant practise and constant rivalry with his fellows, raised the bow into a terrible engine of war. Thrown out along the front in a loose order that alone showed their vigour and self-dependence, the bowmen faced and riddled the splendid line of knighthood as it charged upon them. The galled horses "reeled right rudely." Their riders found even the steel of Milan a poor defence against the grey-goose shaft. Gradually the bow dictated the very tactics of an English battle. If the mass of cavalry still plunged forward, the screen of archers broke to right and left and the men-at-arms who lay in

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reserve behind them made short work of the broken and disordered horsemen, while the light troops from Wales and Ireland flinging themselves into the melly with their long knives and darts brought steed after steed to the ground. It was this new military engine that Edward the Third carried to the fields of France. His armies were practically bodies of hired soldiery, for the short period of feudal service was insufficient for foreign campaigns, and yeoman and baron were alike drawn by a high rate of pay. An archer's daily wages equalled some five shillings of our present money. Such payment when coupled with the hope of plunder was enough to draw yeomen from thorpe and farm; and though the royal treasury was drained as it had never been drained before the English King saw himself after the day of Creçy the master of a force without rival in the stress of war.

Siege of Calais.

To England her success was the beginning of a career of military glory, which fatal as it was destined to prove to the higher sentiments and interests of the nation gave it a warlike energy such as it had never known before. Victory followed victory. A few months after Creçy a Scotch army marched over the border and faced on the seventeenth of October an English force at Neville's Cross. But it was soon broken by the arrow-flight of the English archers, and the Scotch King David Bruce was taken prisoner. The withdrawal of the French from the Garonne enabled Henry of Derby to recover Poitou. Edward meanwhile with a decision which marks his military capacity marched from the field of Creçy to form the siege of Calais. No measure could have been more popular with the English merchant class, for Calais was a great pirate-haven and in a single year twenty-two privateers from its port had swept the Channel. But Edward was guided by weightier considerations than this. In spite of his victory at Sluys the superiority of France at sea had been a constant embarrassment. From this difficulty the capture of Calais would do much to deliver

him, for Dover and Calais together bridled the Channel. Nor was this all. Not only would the possession of the town give Edward a base of operations against France, but it afforded an easy means of communication with the only sure allies of England, the towns of Flanders. Flanders seemed at this moment to be wavering. Its Count had fallen at Creçy, but his son Lewis le Mâle, though his sympathies were as French as his father's, was received in November by his subjects with the invariable loyalty which they showed to their rulers; and his own efforts to detach them from England were seconded by the influence of the Duke of Brabant. But with Edward close at hand beneath the walls of Calais the Flemish towns stood true. They prayed the young Count to marry Edward's daughter, imprisoned him on his refusal, and on his escape to the French Court in the spring of 1347 they threw themselves heartily into the English cause. A hundred thousand Flemings advanced to Cassel and ravaged the French frontier.

The danger of Calais roused Philip from the panic which had followed his defeat, and with a vast army he advanced to the north. But Edward's lines were impregnable. The French King failed in another attempt to dislodge the Flemings, and was at last driven to retreat without a blow. Hopeless of further succour, the town after a year's siege was starved into surrender in August 1347. Mercy was granted to the garrison and the people on condition that six of the citizens gave themselves into the English King's hands. "On them," said Edward with a burst of bitter hatred, "I will do my will." At the sound of the town bell, Jehan le Bel tells us, the folk of Calais gathered round the bearer of these terms, "desiring to hear their good news, for they were all mad with hunger. When the said knight told them his news, then began they to weep and cry so loudly that it was great pity. Then stood up the wealthiest burgess of the town, Master Eustache de St. Pierre by name, and spake

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thus before all: 'My masters, great grief and mishap it were for all to leave such a people as this is to die by famine or otherwise; and great charity and grace would he win from our Lord who could defend them from dying. For me, I have great hope in the Lord that if I can save this people by my death I shall have pardon for my faults, wherefore will I be the first of the six, and of my own will put myself barefoot in my shirt and with a halter round my neck in the mercy of King Edward.'" The list of devoted men was soon made up, and the victims were led before the king. "All the host assembled together; there was great press, and many bade hang them openly, and many wept for pity. The noble King came with his train of counts and barons to the place, and the Queen followed him, though great with child, to see what there would be. The six citizens knelt down at once before the King, and Master Eustache spake thus:—'Gentle King, here we be six who have been of the old bourgeoisie of Calais and great merchants; we bring you the keys of the town and castle of Calais, and render them to you at your pleasure. We set ourselves in such wise as you see purely at your will, to save the remnant of the people that has suffered much pain. So may you have pity and mercy on us for your high nobleness' sake.' Certes, there was then in that place neither lord nor knight that wept not for pity, nor who could speak for pity; but the King had his heart so hardened by wrath that for a long while he could not reply; then he commanded to cut off their heads. All the knights and lords prayed him with tears, as much as they could, to have pity on them, but he would not hear. Then spoke the gentle knight, Master Walter de Maunay, and said, 'Ha, gentle sire! bridle your wrath; you have the renown and good fame of all gentleness; do not a thing whereby men can speak any villany of you! If you have no pity, all men will say that you have a heart full of all cruelty to put these good citizens to death that of their own will are

come to render themselves to you to save the remnant of the people.' At this point the King changed countenance with wrath, and said 'Hold your peace, Master Walter! it shall be none otherwise. Call the headsman. They of Calais have made so many of my men die, that they must die themselves!' Then did the noble Queen of England a deed of noble lowliness, seeing she was great with child, and wept so tenderly for pity that she could no longer stand upright; therefore she cast herself on her knees before her lord the King and spake on this wise: 'Ah, gentle sire, from the day that I passed over sea in great peril, as you know, I have asked for nothing: now pray I and beseech you, with folded hands, for the love of our Lady's Son to have mercy upon them.' The gentle King waited a while before speaking, and looked on the Queen as she knelt before him bitterly weeping. Then began his heart to soften a little, and he said, 'Lady, I would rather you had been otherwhere; you pray so tenderly that I dare not refuse you; and though I do it against my will, nevertheless take them, I give them to you.' Then took he the six citizens by the halters and delivered them to the Queen, and released from death all those of Calais for the love of her; and the good lady bade them clothe the six burgesses and make them good cheer."

CHAPTER III.

THE PEASANT REVOLT.

1347—1381.

Edward the Third.

STILL in the vigour of manhood, for he was but thirty-five, Edward the Third stood at the height of his renown. He had won the greatest victory of his age. France, till now the first of European states, was broken and dashed from her pride of place at a single blow. The kingdom seemed to lie at Edward's mercy, for Guienne was recovered, Flanders was wholly on his side, and Brittany, where the capture of Charles of Blois secured the success of his rival and the English party which supported him, opened the road to Paris. At home his government was popular, and Scotland, the one enemy he had to dread, was bridled by the capture of her King. How great his renown was in Europe was seen in 1347, when on the death of Lewis of Bavaria the electors offered him the Imperial Crown. Edward was in truth a general of a high order, and he had shown himself as consummate a strategist in the campaign as a tactician in the field. But to the world about him he was even more illustrious as the foremost representative of the showy chivalry of his day. He loved the pomp of tournaments; he revived the Round Table of the fabled Arthur; he celebrated his victories by the creation of a new order of knighthood. He had varied the sterner operations of the siege of Calais by a hand to hand combat with one of the bravest of the French knights. A naval picture of Froissart sketches

Edward for us as he sailed to meet a Spanish fleet which was sweeping the narrow seas. We see the King sitting on deck in his jacket of black velvet, his head covered by a black beaver hat "which became him well," and calling on Sir John Chandos to troll out the songs he had brought with him from Germany, till the Spanish ships heave in sight and a furious fight begins which ends in a victory that leaves Edward "King of the Seas."

But beneath all this glitter of chivalry lay the subtle, busy diplomatist. None of our Kings was so restless a negotiator. From the first hour of Edward's rule the threads of his diplomacy ran over Europe in almost inextricable confusion. And to all who dealt with him he was equally false and tricky. Emperor was played off against Pope and Pope against Emperor, the friendship of the Flemish towns was adroitly used to put a pressure on their counts, the national wrath against the exactions of the Roman see was employed to bridle the French sympathies of the court of Avignon, and when the statutes which it produced had served their purpose they were set aside for a bargain in which King and Pope shared the plunder of the Church between them. His temper was as false in his dealings with his people as in his dealings with the European powers. Edward aired to country and parliament his English patriotism. "Above all other lands and realms" he made his chancellor say "the King had most tenderly at heart his land of England, a land more full of delight and honour and profit to him than any other." His manners were popular; he donned on occasion the livery of a city gild; he dined with a London merchant. His perpetual parliaments, his appeals to them and to the country at large for counsel and aid, seemed to promise a ruler who was absolutely one at heart with the people he ruled. But when once Edward passed from sheer carelessness and gratification at the new source of wealth which the Parliament opened to a sense of what its power really was becoming, he showed himself as jealous of freedom

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as any king that had gone before him. He sold his assent to its demands for heavy subsidies, and when he had pocketed the money coolly declared the statutes he had sanctioned null and void. The constitutional progress which was made during his reign was due to his absorption in showy schemes of foreign ambition, to his preference for war and diplomatic intrigue over the sober business of civil administration. The same shallowness of temper, the same showiness and falsehood, ran through his personal character. The King who was a model of chivalry in his dealings with knight and noble showed himself a brutal savage to the burgesses of Calais. Even the courtesy to his Queen which throws its halo over the story of their deliverance went hand in hand with a constant disloyalty to her. When once Philippa was dead his profligacy threw all shame aside. He paraded a mistress as Queen of Beauty through the streets of London, and set her in pomp over tournaments as the Lady of the Sun. The nobles were quick to follow their lord's example. "In those days," writes a chronicler of the time, "arose a rumour and clamour among the people that wherever there was a tournament there came a great concourse of ladies, of the most costly and beautiful but not of the best in the kingdom, sometimes forty and fifty in number, as if they were a part of the tournament, ladies clad in diverse and wonderful male apparel, in parti-coloured tunics, with short caps and bands wound cord-wise round their heads, and girdles bound with gold and silver, and daggers in pouches across their body. And thus they rode on choice coursers to the place of tourney; and so spent and wasted their goods and vexed their bodies with scurrilous wantonness that the murmurs of the people sounded everywhere. But they neither feared God nor blushed at the chaste voice of the people."

The Black Death.

The "chaste voice of the people" was soon to grow into the stern moral protest of the Lollards, but for the moment all murmurs were hushed by the King's success. The

truce which followed the capture of Calais seemed a mere rest in the career of victories which opened before Edward. England was drunk with her glory and with the hope of plunder. The cloths of Caen had been brought after the sack of that town to London. "There was no woman," says Walsingham, "who had not got garments, furs, feather-beds, and utensils from the spoils of Calais and other foreign cities." The Court revelled in gorgeous tournaments and luxury of dress; and the establishment in 1346 of the Order of the Garter which found its home in the new castle that Edward was raising at Windsor marked the highest reach of the spurious "Chivalry" of the day. But it was at this moment of triumph that the whole colour of Edward's reign suddenly changed. The most terrible plague the world has ever witnessed advanced from the East, and after devastating Europe from the shores of the Mediterranean to the Baltic swooped at the close of 1348 upon Britain. The traditions of its destructiveness and the panic-struck words of the statutes passed after its visitation have been amply justified by modern research. Of the three or four millions who then formed the population of England more than one half were swept away in its repeated visitations. Its ravages were fiercest in the greater towns where filthy and undrained streets afforded a constant haunt to leprosy and fever. In the burial ground which the piety of Sir Walter Maunay purchased for the citizens of London, a spot whose site was afterwards marked by the Charter House, more than fifty thousand corpses are said to have been interred. Thousands of people perished at Norwich, while in Bristol the living were hardly able to bury the dead. But the Black Death fell on the villages almost as fiercely as on the towns. More than one-half of the priests of Yorkshire are known to have perished; in the diocese of Norwich two-thirds of the parishes changed their incumbents. The whole organization of labour was thrown out of gear. The scarcity of hands produced by the terrible mortality made it difficult

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for villeins to perform the services due for their lands, and only a temporary abandonment of half the rent by the landowners induced the farmers of their demesnes to refrain from the abandonment of their farms. For a time cultivation became impossible. "The sheep and cattle strayed through the fields and corn," says a contemporary, "and there were none left who could drive them." Even when the first burst of panic was over, the sudden rise of wages consequent on the enormous diminution in the supply of labour, though accompanied by a corresponding rise in the price of food, rudely disturbed the course of industrial employments. Harvests rotted on the ground and fields were left untilled not merely from scarcity of hands but from the strife which now for the first time revealed itself between capital and labour.

Its Social Results.

Nowhere was the effect of the Black Death so keenly felt as in its bearing on the social revolution which had been steadily going on for a century past throughout the country. At the moment we have reached the lord of a manor had been reduced over a large part of England to the position of a modern landlord, receiving a rental in money from his tenants and supplying their place in the cultivation of his demesne lands by paid labourers. He was driven by the progress of enfranchisement to rely for the purposes of cultivation on the supply of hired labour, and hitherto this supply had been abundant and cheap. But with the ravages of the Black Death and the decrease of population labour at once became scarce and dear. There was a general rise of wages, and the farmers of the country as well as the wealthier craftsmen of the town saw themselves threatened with ruin by what seemed to their age the extravagant demands of the labour class. Meanwhile the country was torn with riot and disorder. An outbreak of lawless self-indulgence which followed everywhere in the wake of the plague told especially upon the "landless men," workers wandering in search of work who found themselves for the first time masters of the

labour market; and the wandering labourer or artizan turned easily into the "sturdy beggar," or the bandit of the woods. A summary redress for these evils was at once provided by the Crown in a royal proclamation. "Because a great part of the people," runs this ordinance, "and principally of labourers and servants, is dead of the plague, some, seeing the need of their lords and the scarcity of servants, are unwilling to serve unless they receive excessive wages, and others are rather begging in idleness than supporting themselves by labour, we have ordained that any able-bodied man or woman, of whatsoever condition, free or serf, under sixty years of age, not living of merchandize nor following a trade nor having of his own wherewithal to live, either his own land with the culture of which he could occupy himself, and not serving another, shall if so required serve another for such wages as was the custom in the twentieth year of our reign or five or six years before."

Statute of Labourers

It was the failure of this ordinance to effect its ends which brought about at the close of 1349 the passing of the Statute of Labourers. "Every man or woman," runs this famous provision, "of whatsoever condition, free or bond, able in body, and within the age of threescore years, . . . and not having of his own whereof he may live, nor land of his own about the tillage of which he may occupy himself, and not serving any other, shall be bound to serve the employer who shall require him to do so, and shall take only the wages which were accustomed to be taken in the neighbourhood where he is bound to serve" two years before the plague began. A refusal to obey was punished by imprisonment. But sterner measures were soon found to be necessary. Not only was the price of labour fixed by the Parliament of 1350 but the labour class was once more tied to the soil. The labourer was forbidden to quit the parish where he lived in search of better paid employment; if he disobeyed he became a "fugitive," and subject to imprisonment at the hands of

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justices of the peace. To enforce such a law literally must have been impossible, for corn rose to so high a price that a day's labour at the old wages would not have purchased wheat enough for a man's support. But the landowners did not flinch from the attempt. The repeated re-enactment of the law shows the difficulty of applying it and the stubbornness of the struggle which it brought about. The fines and forfeitures which were levied for infractions of its provisions formed a large source of royal revenue, but so ineffectual were the original penalties that the runaway labourer was at last ordered to be branded with a hot iron on the forehead, while the harbouring of serfs in towns was rigorously put down. Nor was it merely the existing class of free labourers which was attacked by this reactionary movement. The increase of their numbers by a commutation of labour services for money payments was suddenly checked, and the ingenuity of the lawyers who were employed as stewards of each manor was exercized in striving to restore to the landowners that customary labour whose loss was now severely felt. Manumissions and exemptions which had passed without question were cancelled on grounds of informality, and labour services from which they held themselves freed by redemption were again demanded from the villeins. The attempt was the more galling that the cause had to be pleaded in the manor-court itself, and to be decided by the very officer whose interest it was to give judgement in favour of his lord. We can see the growth of a fierce spirit of resistance through the statutes which strove in vain to repress it. In the towns, where the system of forced labour was applied with even more rigour than in the country, strikes and combinations became frequent among the lower craftsmen. In the country the free labourers found allies in the villeins whose freedom from manorial service was questioned. These were often men of position and substance, and throughout the eastern counties the gatherings of "fugitive serfs" were supported by an organized resistance and by large

contributions of money on the part of the wealthier tenantry.

The Peasant Revolt. 1347-1381.

With plague, famine, and social strife in the land, it was no time for reaping the fruits even of such a victory as Crecy. Luckily for England the pestilence had fallen as heavily on her foe as on herself. A common suffering and exhaustion forced both countries to a truce, and though desultory fighting went on along the Breton and Aquitanian borders, the peace which was thus secured lasted with brief intervals of fighting for seven years. It was not till 1355 that the failure of a last effort to turn the truce into a final peace again drove Edward into war. The campaign opened with a brilliant prospect of success. Charles the Bad, King of Navarre, held as a prince of descent from the house of Valois large fiefs in Normandy; and a quarrel springing suddenly up between him and John, who had now succeeded his father Philip on the throne of France, Charles offered to put his fortresses into Edward's hands. Master of Cherbourg, Avranches, Pontaudemer, Evreux and Meulan, Mantes, Mortain, Pontoise, Charles held in his hands the keys of France; and Edward grasped at the opportunity of delivering a crushing blow. Three armies were prepared to act in Normandy, Britanny, and Guienne. But the first two, with Edward and Henry of Derby, who had been raised to the dukedom of Lancaster, at their head, were detained by contrary winds, and Charles, despairing of their arrival, made peace with John. Edward made his way to Calais to meet the tidings of this desertion and to be called back to England by news of a recapture of Berwick by the Scots. But his hopes of Norman co-operation were revived in 1356. The treachery of John, his seizure of the King of Navarre, and his execution of the Count of Harcourt who was looked upon as the adviser of Charles in his policy of intrigue, stirred a general rising throughout Normandy. Edward at once despatched troops under the Duke of Lancaster to its support. But the insurgents were soon forced to fall back. Conscious of the danger to which an English

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occupation of Normandy would expose him, John hastened with a large army to the west, drove Lancaster to Cherbourg, took Evreux, and besieged Breteuil.

The Black Prince.

Here however his progress was suddenly checked by news from the south. The Black Prince, as the hero of Crecy was called, had landed in Guienne during the preceding year and won a disgraceful success. Unable to pay his troops, he staved off their demands by a campaign of sheer pillage. While plague and war and the anarchy which sprang up under the weak government of John were bringing ruin on the northern and central provinces of France, the south remained prosperous and at peace. The young prince led his army of freebooters up the Garonne into "what was before one of the fat countries of the world, the people good and simple, who did not know what war was; indeed no war had been waged against them till the Prince came. The English and Gascons found the country full and gay, the rooms adorned with carpets and draperies, the caskets and chests full of fair jewels. But nothing was safe from these robbers. They, and especially the Gascons, who are very greedy, carried off everything." Glutted by the sack of Carcassone and Narbonne the plunderers fell back to Bordeaux, "their horses so laden with spoil that they could hardly move." Worthier work awaited the Black Prince in the following year. In the plan of campaign for 1356 it had been arranged that he should march upon the Loire, and there unite with a force under the Duke of Lancaster which was to land in Britanny and push rapidly into the heart of France. Delays however hindered the Prince from starting from Bordeaux till July, and when his march brought him to the Loire the plan of campaign had already broken down. The outbreak in Normandy had tempted the English Council to divert the force under Lancaster from Britanny to that province; and the Duke was now at Cherbourg, hard pressed by the French army under John. But if its original purpose was foiled, the march of the Black Prince on the Loire served still more

effectively the English cause. His advance pointed straight upon Paris, and again as in the Creçy campaign John was forced to leave all for the protection of the capital. Hasty marches brought the King to the Loire while Prince Edward still lay at Vierzon on the Cher. Unconscious of John's designs, he wasted some days in the capture of Romorantin while the French troops were crossing the Loire along its course from Orleans to Tours and John with the advance was hurrying through Loches upon Poitiers in pursuit, as he supposed, of the retreating Englishmen. But the movement of the French army, near as it was, was unknown in the English camp; and when the news of it forced the Black Prince to order a retreat the enemy was already far ahead of him. Edward reached the fields north of Poitiers to find his line of retreat cut off and a French army of sixty thousand men interposed between his forces and Bordeaux.

If the Prince had shown little ability in his management of the campaign, he showed tactical skill in the fight which was now forced on him. On the nineteenth of September he took a strong position in the fields of Maupertuis, where his front was covered by thick hedges and approachable only by a deep and narrow lane which ran between vineyards. The vineyards and hedges he lined with bowmen, and drew up his small body of men-at-arms at the point where the lane opened upon the higher plain on which he was himself encamped. Edward's force numbered only eight thousand men, and the danger was great enough to force him to offer in exchange for a free retreat the surrender of his prisoners and of the places he had taken, with an oath not to fight against France for seven years to come. His offers however were rejected, and the battle opened with a charge of three hundred French knights up the narrow lane. But the lane was soon choked with men and horses, while the front ranks of the advancing army fell back before a galling fire of arrows from the hedgerows. In this moment of confusion a body of English

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horsemen, posted unseen by their opponents on a hill to the right, charged suddenly on the French flank, and the Prince watching the disorder which was caused by the repulse and surprize fell boldly on their front. The steady shot of the English archers completed the panic produced by this sudden attack. The first French line was driven in, and on its rout the second, a force of sixteen thousand men, at once broke in wild terror and fled from the field. John still held his ground with the knights of the reserve, whom he had unwisely ordered to dismount from their horses, till a charge of the Black Prince with two thousand lances threw this last body into confusion. The French King was taken, desperately fighting; and when his army poured back at noon in utter rout to the gates of Poitiers eight thousand of their number had fallen on the field, three thousand in the flight, and two thousand men-at-arms, with a crowd of nobles, were taken prisoners. The royal captive entered London in triumph, mounted on a big white charger, while the Prince rode by his side on a little black hackney to the palace of the Savoy which was chosen as John's dwelling, and a truce for two years seemed to give healing-time to France.

Edward and the Scots.

With the Scots Edward the Third had less good fortune. Recalled from Calais by their seizure of Berwick, the King induced Balliol to resign into his hands his shadowy sovereignty, and in the spring of 1356 marched upon Edinburgh with an overpowering army, harrying and burning as he marched. But the Scots refused an engagement, a fleet sent with provisions was beaten off by a storm, and the famine-stricken army was forced to fall rapidly back on the border in a disastrous retreat. The trial convinced Edward that the conquest of Scotland was impossible, and by a rapid change of policy which marks the man he resolved to seek the friendship of the country he had wasted so long. David Bruce was released on promise of ransom, a truce concluded for ten years, and the prohibition of trade between the two kingdoms

put an end to. But the fulness of this reconciliation screened a dexterous intrigue. David was childless and Edward availed himself of the difficulty which the young King experienced in finding means of providing the sum demanded for his ransom to bring him over to a proposal which would have united the two countries for ever. The scheme however was carefully concealed; and it was not till 1363 that David proposed to his Parliament to set aside on his death the claims of the Steward of Scotland to his crown, and to choose Edward's third son, Lionel, Duke of Clarence, as his successor. Though the proposal was scornfully rejected, negotiations were still carried on between the two Kings for the realization of this project, and were probably only put an end to by the calamities of Edward's later years.

Peace of Bretigny.

In France misery and misgovernment seemed to be doing Edward's work more effectively than arms. The miserable country found no rest in itself. Its routed soldiery turned into free companies of bandits, while the lords captured at Creçy or Poitiers procured the sums needed for their ransom by extortion from the peasantry. The reforms demanded by the States-General which met in this agony of France were frustrated by the treachery of the Regent, John's eldest son Charles, Duke of Normandy, till Paris, impatient of his weakness and misrule, rose in arms against the Crown. The peasants too, driven mad by oppression and famine, rose in wild insurrection, butchering their lords and firing their castles over the whole face of France. Paris and the Jacquerie, as this peasant rising was called, were at last crushed by treachery and the sword: and, exhausted as it was, France still backed the Regent in rejecting a treaty of peace by which John in 1359 proposed to buy his release. By this treaty Maine, Touraine and Poitou in the south, Normandy, Guisnes, Ponthieu, and Calais in the west were ceded to the English King. On its rejection Edward in 1360 poured ravaging over the wasted land. Famine however proved its best

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defence. "I could not believe," said Petrarch of this time, "that this was the same France which I had seen so rich and flourishing. Nothing presented itself to my eyes but a fearful solitude, an utter poverty, land uncultivated, houses in ruins. Even the neighbourhood of Paris showed everywhere marks of desolation and conflagration. The streets are deserted, the roads overgrown with weeds, the whole is a vast solitude." The utter desolation forced Edward to carry with him an immense train of provisions, and thousands of baggage waggons with mills, ovens, forges, and fishing-boats, formed a long train which streamed for six miles behind his army. After a fruitless attempt upon Rheims he forced the Duke of Burgundy to conclude a treaty with him by pushing forward to Tonnerre, and then descending the Seine appeared with his army before Paris. But the wasted country forbade a siege, and Edward after summoning the town in vain was forced to fall back for subsistence on the Loire. It was during this march that the Duke of Normandy's envoys overtook him with proposals of peace. The misery of the land had at last bent Charles to submission and in May a treaty was concluded at Bretigny, a small place to the eastward of Chartres. By this treaty the English King waived his claims on the crown of France and on the Duchy of Normandy. On the other hand, his Duchy of Aquitaine, which included Gascony, Guienne, Poitou, and Saintonge, the Limousin and the Angoumois, Perigord and the counties of Bigorre and Rouerque, was not only restored but freed from its obligations as a French fief and granted in full sovereignty with Ponthieu, Edward's heritage from the second wife of Edward the First, as well as with Guisnes and his new conquest of Calais.

Misery of England.

The Peace of Bretigny set its seal upon Edward's glory. But within England itself the misery of the people was deepening every hour. Men believed the world to be ending, and the judgement day to be near. A few months after the Peace came a fresh swoop of the Black Death,

carrying off the Duke of Lancaster. The repressive measures of Parliament and the landowners only widened the social chasm which parted employer from employed. We can see the growth of a fierce spirit of resistance both to the reactionary efforts which were being made to bring back labour services and to the enactments which again bound labour to the soil in statutes which strove in vain to repress the strikes and combinations which became frequent in the towns and the more formidable gatherings of villeins and "fugitive serfs" in the country at large. A statute of later date throws light on the nature of the resistance of the last. It tells us that "villeins and holders of land in villeinage withdrew their customs and services from their lords, having attached themselves to other persons who maintained and abetted them, and who under colour of exemplifications from Domesday of the manors and villages where they dwelt claimed to be quit of all manner of services either of their body or of their lands, and would suffer no distress or other course of justice to be taken against them; the villeins aiding their maintainers by threatening the officers of their lords with peril to life and limb as well by open assemblies as by confederacies to support each other." It would seem not only as if the villein was striving to resist the reactionary tendency of the lords of manors to regain his labour service but that in the general overturning of social institutions the copyholder was struggling to make himself a freeholder, and the farmer to be recognized as proprietor of the demesne he held on lease.

John Ball.

A more terrible outcome of the general suffering was seen in a new revolt against the whole system of social inequality which had till then passed unquestioned as the divine order of the world. The Peace was hardly signed when the cry of the poor found a terrible utterance in the words of "a mad priest of Kent" as the courtly Froissart calls him, who for twenty years to come found audience for his sermons in spite of interdict and imprisonment in

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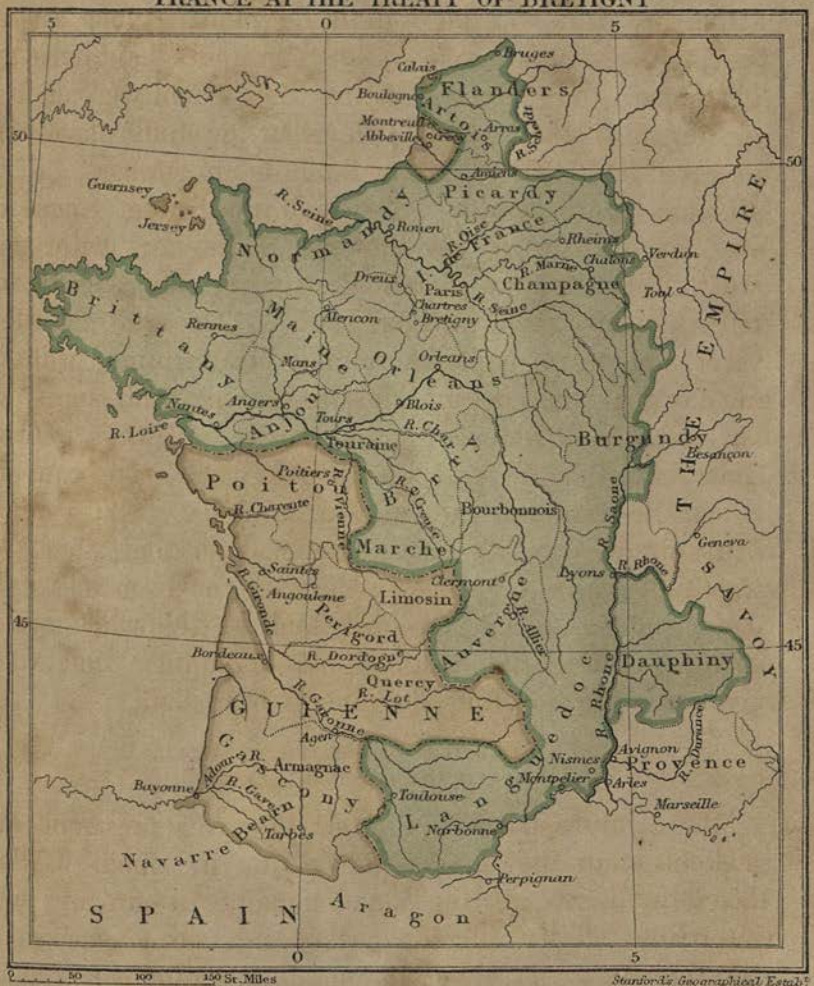
the stout yeomen who gathered round him in the churchyards of Kent. "Mad" as the landowners held him to be, it was in the preaching of John Ball that England first listened to a declaration of the natural equality and rights of man. "Good people," cried the preacher, "things will never be well in England so long as goods be not in common, and so long as there be villeins and gentlemen. By what right are they whom we call lords greater folk than we? On what grounds have they deserved it? Why do they hold us in serfage? If we all came of the same father and mother, of Adam and Eve, how can they say or prove that they are better than we, if it be not that they make us gain for them by our toil what they spend in their pride? They are clothed in velvet and warm in their furs and their ermines, while we are covered with rags. They have wine and spices and fair bread; and we oat-cake and straw, and water to drink. They have leisure and fine houses; we have pain and labour, the rain and the wind in the fields. And yet it is of us and of our toil that these men hold their state." It was the tyranny of property that then as ever roused the defiance of socialism. A spirit fatal to the whole system of the Middle Ages breathed in the popular rime which condensed the levelling doctrine of John Ball:

"When Adam delved and Eve span,
Who was then the gentleman?"

William Longland.

More impressive, because of the very restraint and moderation of its tone, is the poem in which William Longland began at the same moment to embody with a terrible fidelity all the darker and sterner aspects of the time, its social revolt, its moral and religious awakening, the misery of the poor, the selfishness and corruption of the rich. Nothing brings more vividly home to us the social chasm which in the fourteenth century severed the rich from the poor than the contrast between his "Complaint of Piers the Ploughman" and the "Canterbury Tales." The world of wealth and ease and laughter

FRANCE AT THE TREATY OF BRETIGNY



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through which the courtly Chaucer moves with eyes downcast as in a pleasant dream is a far off world of wrong and of ungodliness to the gaunt poet of the poor. Born probably in Shropshire, where he had been put to school and received minor orders as a clerk, "Long Will," as Longland was nicknamed from his tall stature, found his way at an early age to London, and earned a miserable livelihood there by singing "placebos" and "diriges" in the stately funerals of his day. Men took the moody clerk for a madman; his bitter poverty quickened the defiant pride that made him loath, as he tells us, to bow to the gay lords and dames who rode decked in silver and minivere along the Cheap or to exchange a "God save you" with the law sergeants as he passed their new house in the Temple. His world is the world of the poor: he dwells on the poor man's life, on his hunger and toil, his rough revelry and his despair, with the narrow intensity of a man who has no outlook beyond it. The narrowness, the misery, the monotony of the life he paints reflect themselves in his verse. It is only here and there that a love of nature or a grim earnestness of wrath quickens his rime into poetry; there is not a gleam of the bright human sympathy of Chaucer, of his fresh delight in the gaiety, the tenderness, the daring of the world about him, of his picturesque sense of even its coarsest contrasts, of his delicate irony, of his courtly wit. The cumbrous allegory, the tedious platitudes, the rimed texts from Scripture which form the staple of Longland's work, are only broken here and there by phrases of a shrewd common sense, by bitter outbursts, by pictures of a broad Hogarthian humour. What chains one to the poem is its deep undertone of sadness: the world is out of joint, and the gaunt rimer who stalks silently along the Strand has no faith in his power to put it right.

Piers Ploughman.

Londoner as he is, Will's fancy flies far from the sin and suffering of the great city to a May-morning in the Malvern Hills. "I was very forwandered and went me

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to rest under a broad bank by a burn side, and as I lay and leaned and looked in the water I slumbered in a sleeping, it sweyved (sounded) so merry." Just as Chaucer gathers the typical figures of the world he saw into his pilgrim train, so the dreamer gathers into a wide field his army of traders and chafferers, of hermits and solitaries, of minstrels, "japers and jinglers," bidders and beggars, ploughmen that "in setting and in sowing swonken (toil) full hard," pilgrims "with their wenches after," weavers and labourers, burgess and bondman, lawyer and scrivener, court-haunting bishops, friars, and pardoners "parting the silver" with the parish priest. Their pilgrimage is not to Canterbury but to Truth; their guide to Truth neither clerk nor priest but Peterkin the Ploughman, whom they find ploughing in his field. He it is who bids the knight no more wrest gifts from his tenant nor misdo with the poor. "Though he be thine underling here, well may hap in heaven that he be worthier set and with more bliss than thou. . . . For in charnel at church churles be evil to know, or a knight from a knave there." The gospel of equality is backed by the gospel of labour. The aim of the Ploughman is to work, and to make the world work with him. He warns the labourer as he warns the knight. Hunger is God's instrument in bringing the idlest to toil, and Hunger waits to work her will on the idler and the waster. On the eve of the great struggle between wealth and labour, Longland stands alone in his fairness to both, in his shrewd political and religious common sense. In the face of the popular hatred which was to gather round John of Gaunt, he paints the Duke in a famous apologue as the cat who, greedy as she might be, at any rate keeps the noble rats from utterly devouring the mice of the people. Though the poet is loyal to the Church, he proclaims a righteous life to be better than a host of indulgences, and God sends His pardon to Piers when priests dispute it. But he sings as a man conscious of his

loneliness and without hope. It is only in a dream that he sees Corruption, "Lady Mead," brought to trial, and the world repenting at the preaching of Reason. In the waking life reason finds no listeners. The poet himself is looked upon—he tells us bitterly—as a madman. There is a terrible despair in the close of his later poem, where the triumph of Christ is only followed by the reign of Antichrist; where Contrition slumbers amidst the revel of Death and Sin; and Conscience, hard beset by Pride and Sloth, rouses himself with a last effort, and seizing his pilgrim staff, wanders over the world to find Piers Ploughman.

Præmunire

The strife indeed which Longland would have averted raged only the fiercer as the dark years went by. If the Statutes of Labourers were powerless for their immediate ends, either in reducing the actual rate of wages or in restricting the mass of floating labour to definite areas of employment, they proved effective in sowing hatred between employer and employed, between rich and poor. But this social rift was not the only rift which was opening amidst the distress and misery of the time. The close of William Longland's poem is the prophecy of a religious revolution; and the way for such a revolution was being paved by the growing bitterness of strife between England and the Papacy. In spite of the sharp protests from king and parliament the need for money at Avignon was too great to allow any relaxation in the Papal claims. Almost on the eve of Crecy Edward took the decisive step of forbidding the entry into England of any Papal bulls or documents interfering with the rights of presentation belonging to private patrons. But the tenacity of Rome was far from loosening its grasp on this source of revenue for all Edward's protests. Crecy however gave a new boldness to the action of the state, and a Statute of Provisors was passed by the Parliament in 1351 which again asserted the rights of the English Church and enacted that all who infringed them by the introduction

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of Papal "provisors" should suffer imprisonment. But resistance to provisors only brought fresh vexations. The patrons who withstood a Papal nominee in the name of the law were summoned to defend themselves in the Papal Court. From that moment the supremacy of the Papal law over the law of the land became a great question in which the lesser question of provisors merged. The pretension of the Court of Avignon was met in 1353 by a statute which forbade any questioning of judgements rendered in the king's courts or any prosecution of a suit in foreign courts under pain of outlawry, perpetual imprisonment, or banishment from the land. It was this act of Præmunire—as it came in after renewals to be called—which furnished so terrible a weapon to the Tudors in their later strife with Rome. But the papacy paid little heed to these warnings, and its obstinacy in still receiving suits and appeals in defiance of this statute roused the pride of a conquering people. England was still fresh from her glory at Bretigny when Edward appealed to the Parliament of 1365. Complaints, he said, were constantly being made by his subjects to the Pope as to matters which were cognizable in the King's courts. The practice of provisors was thus maintained in the teeth of the laws, and "the laws, usages, ancient customs, and franchises of his kingdom were thereby much hindered, the King's crown degraded, and his person defamed." The King's appeal was hotly met. "Biting words," which it was thought wise to suppress, were used in the debate which followed, and the statutes against provisors and appeals were solemnly confirmed.

Wyclif.

What gave point to this challenge was the assent of the prelates to the proceedings of the Parliament; and the pride of Urban V. at once met it by a counter-defiance. He demanded with threats the payment of the annual sum of a thousand marks promised by King John in acknowledgement of the suzerainty of the See of Rome. The insult roused the temper of the realm. The King laid the

demand before Parliament, and both houses replied that "neither King John nor any king could put himself, his kingdom, nor his people under subjection save with their accord or assent." John's submission had been made "without their assent and against his coronation oath" and they pledged themselves, should the Pope attempt to enforce his claim, to resist him with all their power. Even Urban shrank from imperilling the Papacy by any further demands, and the claim to a Papal lordship over England was never again heard of. But the struggle had brought to the front a man who was destined to give a far wider scope and significance to this resistance to Rome than any as yet dreamed of. Nothing is more remarkable than the contrast between the obscurity of John Wyclif's earlier life and the fulness and vividness of our knowledge of him during the twenty years which preceded its close. Born in the earlier part of the fourteenth century, he had already passed middle age when he was appointed to the mastership of Balliol College in the University of Oxford and recognized as first among the schoolmen of his day. Of all the scholastic doctors those of England had been throughout the keenest and most daring in philosophical speculation. A reckless audacity and love of novelty was the common note of Bacon, Duns Scotus, and Ockham, as against the sober and more disciplined learning of the Parisian schoolmen, Albert and Thomas Aquinas. The decay of the University of Paris during the English wars was transferring her intellectual supremacy to Oxford, and in Oxford Wyclif stood without a rival. From his predecessor, Bradwardine, whose work as a scholastic teacher he carried on in the speculative treatises he published during this period, he inherited the tendency to a predestinarian Augustinianism which formed the groundwork of his later theological revolt. His debt to Ockham revealed itself in his earliest efforts at Church reform. Undismayed by the thunder and excommunications of the Church, Ockham had supported the Emperor

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Lewis of Bavaria in his recent struggle, and he had not shrunk in his enthusiasm for the Empire from attacking the foundations of the Papal supremacy or from asserting the rights of the civil power. The spare, emaciated frame of Wyclif, weakened by study and asceticism, hardly promised a reformer who would carry on the stormy work of Ockham; but within this frail form lay a temper quick and restless, an immense energy, an immovable conviction, an unconquerable pride. The personal charm which ever accompanies real greatness only deepened the influence he derived from the spotless purity of his life. As yet indeed even Wyclif himself can hardly have suspected the immense range of his intellectual power. It was only the struggle that lay before him which revealed in the dry and subtle schoolman the founder of our later English prose, a master of popular invective, of irony, of persuasion, a dexterous politician, an audacious partizan, the organizer of a religious order, the unsparing assailant of abuses, the boldest and most indefatigable of controversialists, the first Reformer who dared, when deserted and alone, to question and deny the creed of the Christendom around him, to break through the tradition of the past, and with his last breath to assert the freedom of religious thought against the dogmas of the Papacy.

"De Dominio Divino."

At the moment of the quarrel with Pope Urban however Wyclif was far from having advanced to such a position as this. As the most prominent of English scholars it was natural that he should come forward in defence of the independence and freedom of the English Church; and he published a formal refutation of the claims advanced by the Papacy to deal at its will with church property in the form of a report of the Parliamentary debates which we have described. As yet his quarrel was not with the doctrines of Rome but with its practices; and it was on the principles of Ockham that he defended the Parliament's refusal of the "tribute" which was claimed by Urban. But his treatise on "The Kingdom of God," "De

Dominio Divino," which can hardly have been written later than 1368, shows the breadth of the ground he was even now prepared to take up. In this, the most famous of his works, Wyclif bases his argument on a distinct ideal of society. All authority, to use his own expression, is "founded in grace." Dominion in the highest sense is in God alone; it is God who as the suzerain of the universe deals out His rule in fief to rulers in their various stations on tenure of their obedience to himself. It was easy to object that in such a case "dominion" could never exist, since mortal sin is a breach of such a tenure and all men sin. But, as Wyclif urged it, the theory is a purely ideal one. In actual practice he distinguishes between dominion and power, power which the wicked may have by God's permission, and to which the Christian must submit from motives of obedience to God. In his own scholastic phrase, so strangely perverted afterwards, here on earth "God must obey the devil." But whether in the ideal or practical view of the matter all power and dominion was of God. It was granted by Him not to one person, His Vicar on earth, as the Papacy alleged, but to all. The King was as truly God's Vicar as the Pope. The royal power was as sacred as the ecclesiastical, and as complete over temporal things, even over the temporalities of the Church, as that of the Church over spiritual things. So far as the question of Church and State therefore was concerned the distinction between the ideal and practical view of "dominion" was of little account. Wyclif's application of the theory to the individual conscience was of far higher and wider importance. Obedient as each Christian might be to king or priest, he himself as a possessor of "dominion" held immediately of God. The throne of God Himself was the tribunal of personal appeal. What the Reformers of the sixteenth century attempted to do by their theory of Justification by Faith Wyclif attempted to do by his theory of Dominion, a theory which in establishing a direct relation between man and God swept away the

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whole basis of a mediating priesthood, the very foundation on which the mediæval church was built.

England and Aquitaine.

As yet the full bearing of these doctrines was little seen. But the social and religious excitement which we have described was quickened by the renewal of the war, and the general suffering and discontent gathered bitterness when the success which had flushed England with a new and warlike pride passed into a long series of disasters in which men forgot the glories of Creçy and Poitiers. Triumph as it seemed, the treaty of Bretigny was really fatal to Edward's cause in the south of France. By the cession of Aquitaine to him in full sovereignty the traditional claim on which his strength rested lost its force. The people of the south had clung to their Duke, even though their Duke was a foreign ruler. They had stubbornly resisted incorporation with Northern France. While preserving however their traditional fealty to the descendants of Eleanor they still clung to the equally traditional suzerainty of the Kings of France. But the treaty of Bretigny not only severed them from the realm of France, it subjected them to the realm of England. Edward ceased to be their hereditary Duke, he became simply an English king ruling Aquitaine as an English dominion. If the Southerners loved the North-French little, they loved the English less, and the treaty which thus changed their whole position was followed by a quick revulsion of feeling from the Garonne to the Pyrenees. The Gascon nobles declared that John had no right to transfer their fealty to another and to sever them from the realm of France. The city of Rochelle prayed the French King not to release it from its fealty to him. "We will obey the English with our lips" said its citizens, "but our hearts shall never be moved towards them." Edward strove to meet this passion for local independence, this hatred of being ruled from London, by sending the Black Prince to Bordeaux and investing him in 1362 with the Duchy of Aquitaine. But the new Duke held his Duchy as a fief from the English King, and

the grievance of the Southerners was left untouched. Charles V. who succeeded his father John in 1364 silently prepared to reap this harvest of discontent. Patient, wary, unscrupulous, he was hardly crowned before he put an end to the war which had gone on without a pause in Britanny by accepting homage from the claimant whom France had hitherto opposed. Through Bertrand du Guesclin, a fine soldier whom his sagacity had discovered, he forced the King of Navarre to a peace which closed the fighting in Normandy. A more formidable difficulty in the way of pacification and order lay in the Free Companies, a union of marauders whom the disbanding of both armies after the peace had set free to harry the wasted land and whom the King's military resources were insufficient to cope with. It was the stroke by which Charles cleared his realm of these scourges which forced on a new struggle with the English in the south.

Pedro the Cruel.

In the judgement of the English court the friendship of Castille was of the first importance for the security of Aquitaine. Spain was the strongest naval power of the western world, and not only would the ports of Guienne be closed but its communication with England would be at once cut off by the appearance of a joint French and Spanish fleet in the Channel. It was with satisfaction therefore that Edward saw the growth of a bitter hostility between Charles and the Castilian King, Pedro the Cruel, through the murder of his wife, Blanche of Bourbon, the French King's sister-in-law. Henry of Trastamara, a bastard son of Pedro's father Alfonso the Eleventh, had long been a refugee at the French court, and soon after the treaty of Bretigny Charles in his desire to revenge this murder on Pedro gave Henry aid in an attempt on the Castilian throne. It was impossible for England to look on with indifference while a dependant of the French King became master of Castille; and in 1362 a treaty offensive and defensive was concluded between Pedro and Edward the Third. The time was not come for open war; but the

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subtle policy of Charles saw in this strife across the Pyrenees an opportunity both of detaching Castille from the English cause and of ridding himself of the Free Companies. With characteristic caution he dexterously held himself in the background while he made use of the Pope, who had been threatened by the Free Companies in his palace at Avignon and was as anxious to get rid of them as himself. Pedro's cruelty, misgovernment, and alliance with the Moslem of Cordova served as grounds for a crusade which was proclaimed by Pope Urban; and Du Guesclin, who was placed at the head of the expedition, found in the Papal treasury and in the hope of booty from an unravaged land means of gathering the marauders round his standard. As soon as these Crusaders crossed the Ebro Pedro was deserted by his subjects, and in 1366 Henry of Trastamara saw himself crowned without a struggle at Burgos as King of Castille. Pedro with his two daughters fled for shelter to Bordeaux and claimed the aid promised in the treaty. The lords of Aquitaine shrank from fighting for such a cause, but in spite of their protests and the reluctance of the English council to embark in so distant a struggle Edward held that he had no choice save to replace his ally, for to leave Henry seated on the throne was to leave Aquitaine to be crushed between France and Castille.

Charles the Fifth.

The after course of the war proved that in his anticipations of the fatal result of a combination of the two powers Edward was right, but his policy jarred not only against the universal craving for rest, but against the moral sense of the world. The Black Prince however proceeded to carry out his father's design in the teeth of the general opposition. His call to arms robbed Henry of the aid of those English Companies who had marched till now with the rest of the crusaders, but who returned at once to the standard of the Prince; the passes of Navarre were opened with gold, and in the beginning of 1367 the English army crossed the Pyrenees. Advancing to the Ebro the Prince

offered battle at Navarete with an army already reduced by famine and disease in its terrible winter march, and Henry with double his numbers at once attacked him. But in spite of the obstinate courage of the Castilian troops the discipline and skill of the English soldiers once more turned the wavering day into a victory. Du Guesclin was taken, Henry fled across the Pyrenees, and Pedro was again seated on his throne. The pay however which he had promised was delayed; and the Prince, whose army had been thinned by disease to a fifth of its numbers and whose strength never recovered from the hardships of this campaign, fell back sick and beggared to Aquitaine. He had hardly returned when his work was undone. In 1368 Henry re-entered Castille; its towns threw open their gates; a general rising chased Pedro from the throne, and a final battle in the spring of 1369 saw his utter overthrow. His murder by Henry's hand left the bastard undisputed master of Castille. Meanwhile the Black Prince, sick and disheartened, was hampered at Bordeaux by the expenses of the campaign which Pedro had left unpaid. To defray his debt he was driven in 1368 to lay a hearth-tax on Aquitaine, and the tax served as a pretext for an outbreak of the long-hoarded discontent. Charles was now ready for open action. He had won over the most powerful among the Gascon nobles, and their influence secured the rejection of the tax in a Parliament of the province which met at Bordeaux. The Prince, pressed by debt, persisted against the counsel of his wisest advisers in exacting it; and the lords of Aquitaine at once appealed to the King of France. Such an appeal was a breach of the treaty of Bretigny in which the French King had renounced his sovereignty over the south; but Charles had craftily delayed year after year the formal execution of the renunciations stipulated in the treaty, and he was still able to treat it as not binding on him. The success of Henry of Trastamara decided him to take immediate action, and in 1369 he summoned the Black Prince as Duke of

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Aquitaine to meet the appeal of the Gascon lords in his court.

Renewal of the War.

The Prince was maddened by the summons. "I will come" he replied, "but with helmet on head, and with sixty thousand men at my back." War however had hardly been declared when the ability with which Charles had laid his plans was seen in his seizure of Ponthieu and in a rising of the whole country south of the Garonne. Du Guesclin returned in 1370 from Spain to throw life into the French attack. Two armies entered Guienne from the east; and a hundred castles with La Reole and Limoges threw open their gates to Du Guesclin. But the march of an English army from Calais upon Paris recalled him from the south to guard the capital at a moment when the English leader advanced to recover Limoges, and the Black Prince borne in a litter to its walls stormed the town and sullied by a merciless massacre of its inhabitants the fame of his earlier exploits. Sickness however recalled him home in the spring of 1371; and the war, protracted by the caution of Charles who forbad his armies to engage, did little but exhaust the energy and treasure of England. As yet indeed the French attack had made small impression on the south, where the English troops stoutly held their ground against Du Guesclin's inroads. But the protracted war drained Edward's resources, while the diplomacy of Charles was busy in rousing fresh dangers from Scotland and Castille. It was in vain that Edward looked for allies to the Flemish towns. The male line of the Counts of Flanders ended in Count Louis le Male; and the marriage of his daughter Margaret with Philip, Duke of Burgundy, a younger brother of the French King, secured Charles from attack along his northern border. In Scotland the death of David Bruce put an end to Edward's schemes for a reunion of the two kingdoms; and his successor, Robert the Steward, renewed in 1371 the alliance with France.

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Castille was a yet more serious danger; and an effort which Edward made to neutralize its attack only forced Henry of Trastamara to fling his whole weight into the struggle. The two daughters of Pedro had remained since their father's flight at Bordeaux. The elder of these was now wedded to John of Gaunt, Edward's fourth son, whom he had created Duke of Lancaster on his previous marriage with Blanche, a daughter of Henry of Lancaster and the heiress of that house, while the younger was wedded to Edward's fifth son, the Earl of Cambridge. Edward's aim was that of raising again the party of King Pedro and giving Henry of Trastamara work to do at home which would hinder his interposition in the war of Guienne. It was with this view that John of Gaunt on his marriage took the title of King of Castille. But no adherent of Pedro's cause stirred in Spain, and Henry replied to the challenge by sending a Spanish fleet to the Channel. A decisive victory which this fleet won over an English convoy off Rochelle proved a fatal blow to the English cause. It wrested from Edward the mastery of the seas, and cut off all communication between England and Guienne. Charles was at once roused to new exertions. Poitou, Saintonge, and the Angoumois yielded to his general Du Guesclin; and Rochelle was surrendered by its citizens in 1372. The next year saw a desperate attempt to restore the fortune of the English arms. A great army under John of Gaunt penetrated into the heart of France. But it found no foe to engage. Charles had forbidden any fighting. "If a storm rages over the land," said the King coolly, "it disperses of itself; and so will it be with the English." Winter in fact overtook the Duke of Lancaster in the mountains of Auvergne, and a mere fragment of his host reached Bordeaux. The failure of this attack was the signal for a general defection, and ere the summer of 1374 had closed the two towns of Bordeaux and Bayonne were all that remained of the English possessions in Southern France. Even these were only saved by the exhaustion

Loss of Aquitaine.

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of the conquerors. The treasury of Charles was as utterly drained as the treasury of Edward; and the Kings were forced to a truce.

The Social Strife.

Only fourteen years had gone by since the Treaty of Bretigny raised England to a height of glory such as it had never known before. But the years had been years of a shame and suffering which stung the people to madness. Never had England fallen so low. Her conquests were lost, her shores insulted, her commerce swept from the seas. Within she was drained by the taxation and bloodshed of the war. Its popularity had wholly died away. When the Commons were asked in 1354 whether they would assent to a treaty of perpetual peace if they might have it, "the said Commons responded all, and all together, 'Yes, yes!'" The population was thinned by the ravages of pestilence, for till 1369, which saw its last visitation, the Black Death returned again and again. The social strife too gathered bitterness with every effort at repression. It was in vain that Parliament after Parliament increased the severity of its laws. The demands of the Parliament of 1376 show how inoperative the previous Statutes of Labourers had proved. They prayed that constables be directed to arrest all who infringed the Statute, that no labourer should be allowed to take refuge in a town and become an artizan if there were need of his service in the county from which he came, and that the King would protect lords and employers against the threats of death uttered by serfs who refused to serve. The reply of the Royal Council shows that statesmen at any rate were beginning to feel that repression might be pushed too far. The King refused to interfere by any further and harsher provisions between employers and employed, and left cases of breach of law to be dealt with in his ordinary courts of justice. On the one side he forbade the threatening gatherings which were already common in the country, but on the other he forbade the illegal exactions of the employers. With such a reply

however the proprietary class were hardly likely to be content. Two years later the Parliament of Gloucester called for a Fugitive-slave Law, which would have enabled lords to seize their serfs in whatever county or town they found refuge, and in 1379 they prayed that judges might be sent five times a year into every shire to enforce the Statute of Labourers.

Edward and the Parliament.

But the strife between employers and employed was not the only rift which was opening in the social structure. Suffering and defeat had stripped off the veil which hid from the nation the shallow and selfish temper of Edward the Third. His profligacy was now bringing him to a premature old age. He was sinking into the tool of his ministers and his mistresses. The glitter and profusion of his court, his splendid tournaments, his feasts, his Table Round, his new order of chivalry, the exquisite chapel of St. Stephen whose frescoed walls were the glory of his palace at Westminster, the vast keep which crowned the hill of Windsor, had ceased to throw their glamour round a King who tricked his Parliament and swindled his creditors. Edward paid no debts. He had ruined the wealthiest bankers of Florence by a cool act of bankruptcy. The sturdier Flemish burghers only wrested payment from him by holding his royal person as their security. His own subjects fared no better than foreigners. The prerogative of "purveyance" by which the King in his progresses through the country had the right of first purchase of all that he needed at fair market price became a galling oppression in the hands of a bankrupt King who was always moving from place to place. "When men hear of your coming," Archbishop Islip wrote to Edward, "everybody at once for sheer fear sets about hiding or eating or getting rid of their geese and chickens or other possessions that they may not utterly lose them through your arrival. The purveyors and servants of your court seize on men and

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horses in the midst of their field work. They seize on the very bullocks that are at plough or at sowing, and force them to work for two or three days at a time without a penny of payment. It is no wonder that men make dole and murmur at your approach, for, as the truth is in God, I myself, whenever I hear a rumour of it, be I at home or in chapter or in church or at study, nay if I am saying mass, even I in my own person tremble in every limb." But these irregular exactions were little beside the steady pressure of taxation. Even in the years of peace fifteenths and tenths, subsidies on wool and subsidies on leather, were demanded and obtained from Parliament; and with the outbreak of war the royal demands became heavier and more frequent. As failure followed failure the expenses of each campaign increased: an ineffectual attempt to relieve Rochelle cost nearly a million; the march of John of Gaunt through France utterly drained the royal treasury. Nor were these legal supplies all that the King drew from the nation. He had repudiated his pledge to abstain from arbitrary taxation of imports and exports. He sold monopolies to the merchants in exchange for increased customs. He wrested supplies from the clergy by arrangements with the bishops or the Pope. There were signs that Edward was longing to rid himself of the control of Parliament altogether. The power of the Houses seemed indeed as high as ever; great statutes were passed. Those of Provisors and Præmunire settled the relations of England to the Roman Court. That of Treason in 1352 defined that crime and its penalties. That of the Staples in 1353 regulated the conditions of foreign trade and the privileges of the merchant gilds which conducted it. But side by side with these exertions of influence we note a series of steady encroachments by the Crown on the power of the Houses. If their petitions were granted, they were often altered in the royal ordinance which professed to embody them. A plan of demanding supplies

for three years at once rendered the annual assembly of Parliament less necessary. Its very existence was threatened by the convocation in 1352 and 1353 of occasional councils with but a single knight from every shire and a single burgess from a small number of the greater towns, which acted as Parliament and granted subsidies.

The Baronage and the Church.

What aided Edward above all in eluding or defying the constitutional restrictions on arbitrary taxation, as well as in these more insidious attempts to displace the Parliament, was the lessening of the check which the Baronage and the Church had till now supplied. The same causes which had long been reducing the number of the greater lords who formed the upper house went steadily on. Under Edward the Second little more than seventy were commonly summoned to Parliament; little more than forty were summoned under Edward the Third, and of these the bulk were now bound to the Crown, partly by their employment on its service, partly by their interest in the continuance of the war. The heads of the Baronage too were members of the royal family. Edward had carried out on a far wider scale than before the policy which had been more or less adhered to from the days of Henry the Third, that of gathering up in the hands of the royal house all the greater heritages of the land. The Black Prince was married to Joan of Kent, the heiress of Edward the First's younger son, Earl Edmund of Woodstock. His marriage with the heiress of the Earl of Ulster brought to the King's second son, Lionel, Duke of Clarence, a great part of the possessions of the de Burghs. Later on the possessions of the house of Bohun passed by like matches to his youngest son, Thomas of Woodstock, and to his grandson Henry of Lancaster. But the greatest English heritage fell to Edward's third living son, John of Gaunt as he was called from his birth at Ghent during his father's Flemish campaign. Originally created Earl of Richmond, the death of his father-in-law, Henry of

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Lancaster, and of Henry's eldest daughter, raised John in his wife's right to the Dukedom of Lancaster and the Earldoms of Derby, Leicester, and Lincoln. But while the baronage were thus bound to the Crown, they drifted more and more into an hostility with the Church which in time disabled the clergy from acting as a check on it. What rent the ruling classes in twain was the growing pressure of the war. The nobles and knighthood of the country, already half ruined by the rise in the labour market and the attitude of the peasantry, were pressed harder than ever by the repeated subsidies which were called for by the continuance of the struggle. In the hour of their distress they cast their eyes greedily—as in the Norman and Angevin days—on the riches of the Church. Never had her wealth been greater. Out of a population of some three millions the ecclesiastics numbered between twenty and thirty thousand. Wild tales of their riches floated about the country. They were said to own in landed property alone more than a third of the soil, while their "spiritualities" in dues and offerings amounted to twice the King's revenue. Exaggerated as such statements were, the wealth of the Church was really great; but even more galling to the nobles was its influence in the royal councils. The feudal baronage, flushed with a new pride by its victories at Creçy and Poitiers, looked with envy and wrath at the throng of bishops around the council-board, and attributed to their love of peace the errors and sluggishness which had caused, as they held, the disasters of the war. To rob the Church of wealth and of power became the aim of a great baronial party.

Weakness of the Church.

The efforts of the baronage indeed would have been fruitless had the spiritual power of the Church remained as of old. But the clergy were rent by their own dissensions. The higher prelates were busy with the cares of political office, and severed from the lower priesthood by the scandalous inequality between the revenues of the wealthier ecclesiastics and the "poor parson" of the country. A bitter

hatred divided the secular clergy from the regular; and this strife went fiercely on in the Universities. Fitz-Ralf, the Chancellor of Oxford, attributed to the friars the decline which was already being felt in the number of academical students, and the University checked by statute their practice of admitting mere children into their order. The clergy too at large shared in the discredit and unpopularity of the Papacy. Though they suffered more than any other class from the exactions of Avignon, they were bound more and more to the Papal cause. The very statutes which would have protected them were practically set aside by the treacherous diplomacy of the Crown. At home and abroad the Roman see was too useful for the King to come to any actual breach with it. However much Edward might echo the bold words of his Parliament, he shrank from an open contest which would have added the Papacy to his many foes, and which would at the same time have robbed him of his most effective means of wresting aids from the English clergy by private arrangement with the Roman court. Rome indeed was brought to waive its alleged right of appointing foreigners to English livings. But a compromise was arranged between the Pope and the Crown in which both united in the spoliation and enslavement of the Church. The voice of chapters, of monks, of ecclesiastical patrons, went henceforth for nothing in the election of bishops or abbots or the nomination to livings in the gift of churchmen. The Crown recommended those whom it chose to the Pope, and the Pope nominated them to see or cure of souls. The treasuries of both King and Pope profited by the arrangement; but we can hardly wonder that after a betrayal such as this the clergy placed little trust in statutes or royal protection, and bowed humbly before the claims of Rome.

Its Worldliness.

But what weakened the clergy most was their severance from the general sympathies of the nation, their selfishness, and the worldliness of their temper. Immense as their

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wealth was, they bore as little as they could of the common burthens of the realm. They were still resolute to assert their exemption from the common justice of the land, though the mild punishments of the bishops' courts carried as little dismay as ever into the mass of disorderly clerks. But privileged as they thus held themselves against all interference from the lay world without them, they carried on a ceaseless interference with the affairs of this lay world through their control over wills, contracts and divorces. No figure was better known or more hated than the summoner who enforced the jurisdiction and levied the dues of their courts. By their directly religious offices they penetrated into the very heart of the social life about them. But powerful as they were, their moral authority was fast passing away. The wealthier churchmen with their curled hair and hanging sleeves aped the costume of the knightly society from which they were drawn and to which they still really belonged. We see the general impression of their worldliness in Chaucer's pictures of the hunting monk and the courtly prioress with her love-motto on her brooch. The older religious orders in fact had sunk into mere landowners, while the enthusiasm of the friars had in great part died away and left a crowd of impudent mendicants behind it. Wyclif could soon with general applause denounce them as sturdy beggars, and declare that "the man who gives alms to a begging friar is ipso facto excommunicate."

Advance of the Commons.

It was this weakness of the Baronage and the Church, and the consequent withdrawal of both as represented in the temporal and spiritual Estates of the Upper House from the active part which they had taken till now in checking the Crown, that brought the Lower House to the front. The Knight of the Shire was now finally joined with the Burgess of the Town to form the Third Estate of the realm: and this union of the trader and the country gentleman gave a vigour and weight to the action of the Commons which their House could never

have acquired had it remained as elsewhere a mere gathering of burgesses. But it was only slowly and under the pressure of one necessity after another that the Commons took a growing part in public affairs. Their primary business was with taxation, and here they stood firm against the evasions by which the King still managed to baffle their exclusive right of granting supplies by voluntary agreements with the merchants of the Staple. Their steady pressure at last obtained in 1362 an enactment that no subsidy should henceforth be set upon wool without assent of Parliament, while Purveyance was restricted by a provision that payments should be made for all things taken for the King's use in ready money. A hardly less important advance was made by the change of Ordinances into Statutes. Till this time, even when a petition of the Houses was granted, the royal Council had reserved to itself the right of modifying its form in the Ordinance which professed to embody it. It was under colour of this right that so many of the provisions made in Parliament had hitherto been evaded or set aside. But the Commons now met this abuse by a demand that on the royal assent being given their petitions should be turned without change into Statutes of the Realm and derive force of law from their entry on the Rolls of Parliament. The same practical sense was seen in their dealings with Edward's attempt to introduce occasional smaller councils with parliamentary powers. Such an assembly in 1353 granted a subsidy on wool. The Parliament which met in the following year might have challenged its proceedings as null and void, but the Commons more wisely contented themselves with a demand that the ordinances passed in the preceding assembly should receive the sanction of the Three Estates. A precedent for evil was thus turned into a precedent for good, and though irregular gatherings of a like sort were for a while occasionally held they were soon seen to be fruitless and discontinued. But the Commons long shrank from

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meddling with purely administrative matters. When Edward in his anxiety to shift from himself the responsibility of the war referred to them in 1354 for advice on one of the numerous propositions of peace, they referred him to the lords of his Council. "Most dreaded lord," they replied, "as to this war and the equipment needful for it we are so ignorant and simple that we know not how nor have the power to devise. Wherefore we pray your Grace to excuse us in this matter, and that it please you with the advice of the great and wise persons of your Council to ordain what seems best for you for the honour and profit of yourself and of your kingdom. And whatsoever shall be thus ordained by assent and agreement on the part of you and your Lords we readily assent to and will hold it firmly established."

Baronage attacks the Church.

But humble as was their tone the growing power of the Commons showed itself in significant changes. In 1363 the Chancellor opened Parliament with a speech in English, no doubt as a tongue intelligible to the members of the Lower House. From a petition in 1376 that knights of the shire may be chosen by common election of the better folk of the shire and not merely nominated by the sheriff without due election, as well as from an earlier demand that the sheriffs themselves should be disqualified from serving in Parliament during their term of office, we see that the Crown had already begun not only to feel the pressure of the Commons but to meet it by foisting royal nominees on the constituencies. Such an attempt at packing the House would hardly have been resorted to had it not already proved too strong for direct control. A further proof of its influence was seen in a prayer of the Parliament that lawyers practising in the King's courts might no longer be eligible as knights of the shire. The petition marks the rise of a consciousness that the House was now no mere gathering of local representatives but a national assembly, and that a seat in it could no longer be confined to dwellers within the bounds of this county

or that. But it showed also a pressure for seats, a passing away of the old dread of being returned as a representative and a new ambition to gain a place among the members of the Commons. Whether they would or no indeed the Commons were driven forward to a more direct interference with public affairs. From the memorable statute of 1322 their right to take equal part in all matters brought before Parliament had been incontestable, and their waiver of much of this right faded away before the stress of time. Their assent was needed to the great ecclesiastical statutes which regulated the relation of the see of Rome to the realm. They naturally took a chief part in the enactment and re-enactment of the Statute of Labourers. The Statute of the Staple, with a host of smaller commercial and economical measures, were of their origination. But it was not till an open breach took place between the baronage and the prelates that their full weight was felt. In the Parliament of 1371, on the resumption of the war, a noble taunted the Church as an owl protected by the feathers which other birds had contributed, and which they had a right to resume when a hawk's approach threatened them. The worldly goods of the Church, the metaphor hinted, had been bestowed on it for the common weal, and could be taken from it on the coming of a common danger. The threat was followed by a prayer that the chief offices of state, which had till now been held by the leading bishops, might be placed in lay hands. The prayer was at once granted: William of Wykeham, Bishop of Winchester, resigned the Chancellorship, another prelate the Treasury, to lay dependents of the great nobles; and the panic of the clergy was seen in large grants which were voted by both Convocations.

John of Gaunt.

At the moment of their triumph the assailants of the Church found a leader in John of Gaunt. The Duke of Lancaster now wielded the actual power of the Crown. Edward himself was sinking into dotage. Of his sons the

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Black Prince, who had never rallied from the hardships of his Spanish campaign, was fast drawing to the grave; he had lost a second son by death in childhood; the third, Lionel of Clarence, had died in 1368. It was his fourth son therefore, John of Gaunt, to whom the royal power mainly fell. By his marriage with the heiress of the house of Lancaster the Duke had acquired lands and wealth, but he had no taste for the policy of the Lancastrian house or for acting as leader of the barons in any constitutional resistance to the Crown. His pride, already quickened by the second match with Constance to which he owed his shadowy kingship of Castille, drew him to the throne; and the fortune which placed the royal power practically in his hands bound him only the more firmly to its cause. Men held that his ambition looked to the Crown itself, for the approaching death of Edward and the Prince of Wales left but a boy, Richard, the son of the Black Prince, a child of but a few years old, and a girl, the daughter of the Duke of Clarence, between John and the throne. But the Duke's success fell short of his pride. In the campaign of 1373 he traversed France without finding a foe and brought back nothing save a ruined army to English shores. The peremptory tone in which money was demanded for the cost of this fruitless march while the petitions of the Parliament were set aside till it was granted roused the temper of the Commons. They requested—it is the first instance of such a practice—a conference with the lords, and while granting fresh subsidies prayed that the grant should be spent only on the war. The resentment of the government at this advance towards a control over the actual management of public affairs was seen in the calling of no Parliament through the next two years. But the years were disastrous both at home and abroad. The war went steadily against the English arms. The long negotiations with the Pope which went on at Bruges through 1375, and in which Wyclif took part as one of the royal commissioners, ended

in a compromise by which Rome yielded nothing. The strife over the Statute of Labourers grew fiercer and fiercer, and a return of the plague heightened the public distress. Edward was now wholly swayed by Alice Perrers, and the Duke shared his power with the royal mistress. But if we gather its tenor from the complaints of the succeeding Parliament his administration was as weak as it was corrupt. The new lay ministers lent themselves to gigantic frauds. The chamberlain, Lord Latimer, bought up the royal debts and embezzled the public revenue. With Richard Lyons, a merchant through whom the King negotiated with the gild of the Staple, he reaped enormous profits by raising the price of imports and by lending to the Crown at usurious rates of interest. When the empty treasury forced them to call a Parliament the ministers tampered with the elections through the sheriffs.

The Good Parliament.

But the temper of the Parliament which met in 1376, and which gained from after times the name of the Good Parliament, shows that these precautions had utterly failed. Even their promise to pillage the Church had failed to win for the Duke and his party the good will of the lesser gentry or the wealthier burgesses who together formed the Commons. Projects of wide constitutional and social change, of the humiliation and impoverishment of an estate of the realm, were profoundly distasteful to men already struggling with a social revolution on their own estates and in their own workshops. But it was not merely its opposition to the projects of Lancaster and his party among the baronage which won for this assembly the name of the Good Parliament. Its action marked a new period in our Parliamentary history, as it marked a new stage in the character of the national opposition to the misrule of the Crown. Hitherto the task of resistance had devolved on the baronage, and had been carried out through risings of its feudal tenantry. But the misgovernment was now that of the baronage or of a main

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part of the baronage itself in actual conjunction with the Crown. Only in the power of the Commons lay any adequate means of peaceful redress. The old reluctance of the Lower House to meddle with matters of State was roughly swept away therefore by the pressure of the time. The Black Prince, anxious to secure his child's succession by the removal of John of Gaunt, the prelates with William of Wykeham at their head, resolute again to take their place in the royal councils and to check the projects of ecclesiastical spoliation put forward by their opponents, alike found in it a body to oppose to the Duke's administration. Backed by powers such as these, the action of the Commons showed none of their old timidity or self-distrust. The presentation of a hundred and sixty petitions of grievances preluded a bold attack on the royal Council. "Trusting in God, and standing with his followers before the nobles, whereof the chief was John Duke of Lancaster, whose doings were ever contrary," their speaker, Sir Peter de la Mare, denounced the mismanagement of the war, the oppressive taxation, and demanded an account of the expenditure. "What do these base and ignoble knights attempt?" cried John of Gaunt. "Do they think they be kings or princes of the land?" But the movement was too strong to be stayed. Even the Duke was silenced by the charges brought against the ministers. After a strict enquiry Latimer and Lyons were alike thrown into prison, Alice Perrers was banished, and several of the royal servants were driven from the Court. At this moment the death of the Black Prince shook the power of the Parliament. But it only heightened its resolve to secure the succession. His son, Richard of Bordeaux, as he was called from the place of his birth, was now a child of but ten years old; and it was known that doubts were whispered on the legitimacy of his birth and claim. An early marriage of his mother Joan of Kent, a granddaughter of Edward the First, with the Earl of Salisbury had

been annulled; but the Lancastrian party used this first match to throw doubts on the validity of her subsequent union with the Black Prince and on the right of Richard to the throne. The dread of Lancaster's ambition is the first indication of the approach of what was from this time to grow into the great difficulty of the realm, the question of the succession to the Crown. From the death of Edward the Third to the death of Charles the First no English sovereign felt himself secure from rival claimants of his throne. As yet however the dread was a baseless one; the people were heartily with the Prince and his child. The Duke's proposal that the succession should be settled in case of Richard's death was rejected; and the boy himself was brought into Parliament and acknowledged as heir of the Crown.

Wyclif and John of Gaunt.

To secure their work the Commons ended by obtaining the addition of nine lords with William of Wykeham and two other prelates among them to the royal Council. But the Parliament was no sooner dismissed than the Duke at once resumed his power. His anger at the blow which had been dealt at his projects was no doubt quickened by resentment at the sudden advance of the Lower House. From the Commons who shrank even from giving counsel on matters of state to the Commons who dealt with such matters as their special business, who investigated royal accounts, who impeached royal ministers, who dictated changes in the royal advisers, was an immense step. But it was a step which the Duke believed could be retraced. His haughty will flung aside all restraints of law. He dismissed the new lords and prelates from the Council. He called back Alice Perrers and the disgraced ministers. He declared the Good Parliament no parliament, and did not suffer its petitions to be enrolled as statutes. He imprisoned Peter de la Mare, and confiscated the possessions of William of Wykeham. His attack on this prelate was an attack on the clergy at large, and the attack became significant when the Duke gave his open patronage to the denuncia-

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tions of Church property which formed the favourite theme of John Wyclif. To Wyclif such a prelate as Wykeham symbolized the evil which held down the Church. His administrative ability, his political energy, his wealth and the colleges at Winchester and at Oxford which it enabled him to raise before his death, were all equally hateful. It was this wealth, this intermeddling with worldly business, which the ascetic reformer looked upon as the curse that robbed prelates and churchmen of that spiritual authority which could alone meet the vice and suffering of the time. Whatever baser motives might spur Lancaster and his party, their projects of spoliation must have seemed to Wyclif projects of enfranchisement for the Church. Poor and powerless in worldly matters, he held that she would have the wealth and might of heaven at her command. Wyclif's theory of Church and State had led him long since to contend that the property of the clergy might be seized and employed like other property for national purposes. Such a theory might have been left, as other daring theories of the schoolmen had been left, to the disputation of the schools. But the clergy were bitterly galled when the first among English teachers threw himself hotly on the side of the party which threatened them with spoliation, and argued in favour of their voluntary abandonment of all Church property and of a return to their original poverty. They were roused to action when Wyclif came forward as the theological bulwark of the Lancastrian party at a moment when the clergy were freshly outraged by the overthrow of the bishops and the plunder of Wykeham. They forced the King to cancel the sentence of banishment from the precincts of the Court which had been directed against the Bishop of Winchester by refusing any grant of supply in Convocation till William of Wykeham took his seat in it. But in the prosecution of Wyclif they resolved to return blow for blow. In February 1377 he was summoned before Bishop Courtenay of

London to answer for his heretical propositions concerning the wealth of the Church.

The Duke of Lancaster accepted the challenge as really given to himself, and stood by Wyclif's side in the Consistory Court at St. Paul's. But no trial took place. Fierce words passed between the nobles and the prelate: the Duke himself was said to have threatened to drag Courtenay out of the church by the hair of his head; at last the London populace, to whom John of Gaunt was hateful, burst in to their Bishop's rescue, and Wyclif's life was saved with difficulty by the aid of the soldiery. But his boldness only grew with the danger. A Papal bull which was procured by the bishops, directing the University to condemn and arrest him, extorted from him a bold defiance. In a defence circulated widely through the kingdom and laid before Parliament, Wyclif broadly asserted that no man could be excommunicated by the Pope "unless he were first excommunicated by himself." He denied the right of the Church to exact or defend temporal privileges by spiritual censures, declared that a Church might justly be deprived by the King or lay lords of its property for defect of duty, and defended the subjection of ecclesiastics to civil tribunals. It marks the temper of the time and the growing severance between the Church and the nation that, bold as the defiance was, it won the support of the people as of the Crown. When Wyclif appeared at the close of the year in Lambeth Chapel to answer the Archbishop's summons a message from the Court forbade the primate to proceed and the Londoners broke in and dissolved the session.

Death of Edward the Third.

Meanwhile the Duke's unscrupulous tampering with elections had packed the Parliament of 1377 with his adherents. The work of the Good Parliament was undone, and the Commons petitioned for the restoration of all who had been impeached by their predecessors. The needs of the treasury were met by a novel form of taxation. To the earlier land-tax, to the tax on personality which dated from

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the Saladin Tithe, to the customs duties which had grown into importance in the last two reigns, was now added a tax which reached every person in the realm, a poll-tax of a groat a head. In this tax were sown the seeds of future trouble, but when the Parliament broke up in March the Duke's power seemed completely secured. Hardly three months later it was wholly undone. In June Edward the Third died in a dishonoured old age, robbed on his death-bed even of his rings by the mistress to whom he clung, and the accession of his grandson, Richard the Second, changed the whole face of affairs. The Duke withdrew from court, and sought a reconciliation with the party opposed to him. The men of the Good Parliament surrounded the new King, and a Parliament which assembled in October took vigorously up its work. Peter de la Mare was released from prison and replaced in the chair of the House of Commons. The action of the Lower House indeed was as trenchant and comprehensive as that of the Good Parliament itself. In petition after petition the Commons demanded the confirmation of older rights and the removal of modern abuses. They complained of administrative wrongs such as the practice of purveyance, of abuses of justice, of the oppressions of officers of the exchequer and of the forest, of the ill state of the prisons, of the custom of "maintenance" by which lords extended their livery to shoals of disorderly persons and overawed the courts by means of them. Amid ecclesiastical abuses they noted the state of the Church courts, and the neglect of the laws of Provisors. They demanded that the annual assembly of Parliament, which had now become customary, should be defined by law, and that bills once sanctioned by the Crown should be forthwith turned into statutes without further amendment or change on the part of the royal Council. With even greater boldness they laid hands on the administration itself. They not only demanded that the evil counsellors of the last reign should be removed, and that the treasurer of the subsidy on wool

should account for its expenditure to the lords, but that the royal Council should be named in Parliament, and chosen from members of either estate of the realm. Though a similar request for the nomination of the officers of the royal household was refused, their main demand was granted. It was agreed that the great officers of state, the chancellor, treasurer, and barons of exchequer should be named by the lords in Parliament, and removed from their offices during the king's "tender years" only on the advice of the lords. The pressure of the war, which rendered the existing taxes insufficient, gave the House a fresh hold on the Crown. While granting a new subsidy in the form of a land and property tax, the Commons restricted its proceeds to the war, and assigned two of their members, William Walworth and John Philpot, as a standing committee to regulate its expenditure. The successor of this Parliament in the following year demanded and obtained an account of the way in which the subsidy had been spent.

Discontent of the people.

The minority of the King, who was but eleven years old at his accession, the weakness of the royal council amidst the strife of the baronial factions, above all the disasters of the war without and the growing anarchy within the realm itself, alone made possible this startling assumption of the executive power by the Houses. The shame of defeat abroad was being added to the misery and discomfort at home. The French war ran its disastrous course. One English fleet was beaten by the Spaniards, a second sunk by a storm; and a campaign in the heart of France ended, like its predecessors, in disappointment and ruin. Meanwhile the strife between employers and employed was kindling into civil war. The Parliament, drawn as it was wholly from the proprietary classes, struggled as fiercely for the mastery of the labourers as it struggled for the mastery of the Crown. The Good Parliament had been as strenuous in demanding the enforcement of the Statute of Labourers as any of its

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predecessors. In spite of statutes however the market remained in the labourers' hands. The comfort of the worker rose with his wages. Men who had "no land to live on but their hands disdained to live on penny ale or bacon, and called for fresh flesh or fish, fried or bake, and that hot and hotter for chilling of their maw." But there were dark shades in this general prosperity of the labour class. There were seasons of the year during which employment for the floating mass of labour was hard to find. In the long interval between harvest-tide and harvest-tide work and food were alike scarce in every homestead of the time. Some lines of William Longland give us the picture of a farm of the day. "I have no penny pullets for to buy, nor neither geese nor pigs, but two green cheeses, a few curds and cream, and an oaten cake, and two loaves of beans and bran baken for my children. I have no salt bacon nor no cooked meat collops for to make, but I have parsley and leeks and many cabbage plants, and eke a cow and a calf, and a cart-mare to draw a-field my dung while the drought lasteth, and by this livelihood we must all live till Lammas-tide [August], and by that I hope to have harvest in my croft." But it was not till Lammas-tide that high wages and the new corn bade "Hunger go to sleep," and during the long spring and summer the free labourer and the "waster that will not work but wander about, that will eat no bread but the finest wheat, nor drink but of the best and brownest ale," was a source of social and political danger. "He grieveth him against God and grudgeth against Reason, and then curseth he the King and all his council after such law to allow labourers to grieve." Such a smouldering mass of discontent as this needed but a spark to burst into flame; and the spark was found in the imposition of fresh taxation.

The Poll-tax.

If John of Gaunt was fallen from his old power he was still the leading noble in the realm, and it is possible that dread of the encroachments of the last Parliament on the executive power drew after a time even the new advisers

of the Crown closer to him. Whatever was the cause, he again came to the front. But the supplies voted in the past year were wasted in his hands. A fresh expedition against France under the Duke himself ended in failure before the walls of St. Malo, while at home his brutal household was outraging public order by the murder of a knight who had incurred John's anger in the precincts of Westminster. So great was the resentment of the Londoners at this act that it became needful to summon Parliament elsewhere than to the capital; and in 1378 the Houses met at Gloucester. The Duke succeeded in bringing the lords to refuse those conferences with the Commons which had given unity to the action of the late Parliament, but he was foiled in an attack on the clerical privilege of sanctuary and in the threats which his party still directed against Church property, while the Commons forced the royal Council to lay before them the accounts of the last subsidy and to appoint a commission to examine into the revenue of the Crown. Unhappily the financial policy of the preceding year was persisted in. The check before St. Malo had been somewhat redeemed by treaties with Charles of Evreux and the Duke of Britanny which secured to England the right of holding Cherbourg and Brest; but the cost of these treaties only swelled the expenses of the war. The fresh supplies voted at Gloucester proved insufficient for their purpose, and a Parliament in the spring of 1379 renewed the Poll-tax in a graduated form. But the proceeds of the tax proved miserably inadequate, and when fresh debts beset the Crown in 1380 a return was again made to the old system of subsidies. But these failed in their turn; and at the close of the year the Parliament again fell back on a severer Poll-tax. One of the attractions of the new mode of taxation seems to have been that the clergy, who adopted it for themselves, paid in this way a larger share of the burthens of the state; but the chief ground for its adoption lay, no doubt,

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in its bringing within the net of the tax-gatherer a class which had hitherto escaped him, men such as the free labourer, the village smith, the village tiler. But few courses could have been more dangerous. The poll-tax not only brought the pressure of the war home to every household; it goaded into action precisely the class which was already seething with discontent. The strife between labour and capital was going on as fiercely as ever in country and in town. The landlords were claiming new services, or forcing men who looked on themselves as free to prove they were no villeins by law. The free labourer was struggling against the attempt to exact work from him at low wages. The wandering workman was being seized and branded as a vagrant. The abbey towns were struggling for freedom against the abbeys. The craftsmen within boroughs were carrying on the same strife against employer and craft-gild. And all this mass of discontent was being heightened and organized by agencies with which the government could not cope. The poorer villeins and the free labourers had long since banded together in secret conspiracies which the wealthier villeins supported with money. The return of soldiers from the war threw over the land a host of broken men, skilled in arms, and ready to take part in any rising. The begging friars, wandering and gossiping from village to village and street to street, shared the passions of the class from which they sprang. Priests like Ball openly preached the doctrines of communism. And to these had been recently added a fresh agency which could hardly fail to stir a new excitement. With the practical ability which marked his character Wyclif set on foot about this time a body of poor preachers to supply, as he held, the place of those wealthier clergy who had lost their hold on the land. The coarse sermons, bare feet, and russet dress of these "Simple Priests" moved the laughter of rector and canon, but they proved a rapid and effective means of diffusing Wyclif's protests against the wealth and sluggishness of the clergy, and we can hardly

doubt that in the general turmoil their denunciation of ecclesiastical wealth passed often into more general denunciations of the proprietary classes.

John Ball.

As the spring went by quaint rimes passed through the country, and served as a summons to revolt. "John Ball," ran one, "greeteth you all, and doth for to understand he hath rung your bell. Now right and might, will and skill, God speed every dele." "Help truth," ran another, "and truth shall help you! Now reigneth pride in price, and covetise is counted wise, and lechery withouten shame, and gluttony withouten blame. Envy reigneth with treason, and sloth is take in great season. God do bote, for now is tyme!" We recognize Ball's hand in the yet more stirring missives of "Jack the Miller" and "Jack the Carter." "Jack Miller asketh help to turn his mill aright. He hath grounden small, small: the King's Son of Heaven he shall pay for all. Look thy mill go aright with the four sailes, and the post stand with steadfastness. With right and with might, with skill and with will; let might help right, and skill go before will, and right before might, so goeth our mill aright." "Jack Carter," ran the companion missive, "prays you all that ye make a good end of that ye have begun, and do well, and aye better and better: for at the even men heareth the day." "Falseness and guile," sang Jack Trewman, "have reigned too long, and truth hath been set under a lock, and falseness and guile reigneth in every stock. No man may come truth to, but if he sing 'si dedero.' True love is away that was so good, and clerks for wealth work them woe. God do bote, for now is time." In the rude jingle of these lines began for England the literature of political controversy: they are the first predecessors of the pamphlets of Milton and of Burke. Rough as they are, they express clearly enough the mingled passions which met in the revolt of the peasants: their longing for a right rule, for plain and simple justice; their scorn of the immorality of the nobles and the infamy

CHAP. III. of the court; their resentment at the perversion of the law to the cause of oppression.

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The Peasant Rising.

From the eastern and midland counties the restlessness spread to all England south of the Thames. But the grounds of discontent varied with every district. The actual outbreak began on the 5th of June at Dartford, where a tiler killed one of the collectors of the poll-tax in vengeance for a brutal outrage on his daughter. The county at once rose in arms. Canterbury, where "the whole town was of their mind," threw open its gates to the insurgents who plundered the Archbishop's palace and dragged John Ball from his prison. A hundred thousand Kentishmen gathered round Walter Tyler of Essex and John Hales of Malling to march upon London. Their grievance was mainly a political one. Villeinage was unknown in Kent. As the peasants poured towards Blackheath indeed every lawyer who fell into their hands was put to death; "not till all these were killed would the land enjoy its old freedom again," the Kentishmen shouted as they fired the houses of the stewards and flung the rolls of the manor-courts into the flames. But this action can hardly have been due to anything more than sympathy with the rest of the realm, the sympathy which induced the same men when pilgrims from the north brought news that John of Gaunt was setting free his bondmen to send to the Duke an offer to make him Lord and King of England. Nor was their grievance a religious one. Lollardry can have made little way among men whose grudge against the Archbishop of Canterbury sprang from his discouragement of pilgrimages. Their discontent was simply political; they demanded the suppression of the poll-tax and better government; their aim was to slay the nobles and wealthier clergy, to take the king into their own hands, and pass laws which should seem good to the Commons of the realm. The whole population joined the Kentishmen as they marched along, while the nobles were paralyzed with fear. The young king—he was but

a boy of sixteen—addressed them from a boat on the river; but the refusal of his Council under the guidance of Archbishop Sudbury to allow him to land kindled the peasants to fury, and with cries of "Treason" the great mass rushed on London. On the 13th of June its gates were flung open by the poorer artizans within the city, and the stately palace of John of Gaunt at the Savoy, the new inn of the lawyers at the Temple, the houses of the foreign merchants, were soon in a blaze. But the insurgents, as they proudly boasted, were "seekers of truth and justice, not thieves or robbers," and a plunderer found carrying off a silver vessel from the sack of the Savoy was flung with his spoil into the flames. Another body of insurgents encamped at the same time to the east of the city. In Essex and the eastern counties the popular discontent was more social than political. The demands of the peasants were that bondage should be abolished, that tolls and imposts on trade should be done away with, that "no acre of land which is held in bondage or villeinage be held at higher rate than fourpence a year," in other words for a money commutation of all villein services. Their rising had been even earlier than that of the Kentishmen. Before Whitsuntide an attempt to levy the poll-tax gathered crowds of peasants together, armed with clubs, rusty swords, and bows. The royal commissioners who were sent to repress the tumult were driven from the field, and the Essex men marched upon London on one side of the river as the Kentishmen marched on the other. The evening of the thirteenth, the day on which Tyler entered the city, saw them encamped without its walls at Mile-end. At the same moment Highbury and the northern heights were occupied by the men of Hertfordshire and the villeins of St. Alban's, where a strife between abbot and town had been going on since the days of Edward the Second.

Richard the Second.

The royal Council with the young King had taken refuge in the Tower, and their aim seems to have been to

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divide the forces of the insurgents. On the morning of the fourteenth therefore Richard rode from the Tower to Mile-end to meet the Essex men. "I am your King and Lord, good people," the boy began with a fearlessness which marked his bearing throughout the crisis "what will you?" "We will that you free us for ever," shouted the peasants, "us and our lands; and that we be never named nor held for serfs!" "I grant it," replied Richard; and he bade them go home, pledging himself at once to issue charters of freedom and amnesty. A shout of joy welcomed the promise. Throughout the day more than thirty clerks were busied writing letters of pardon and emancipation, and with these the mass of the Essex men and the men of Hertfordshire withdrew quietly to their homes. But while the King was successful at Mile-end a terrible doom had fallen on the councillors he left behind him. Richard had hardly quitted the Tower when the Kentishmen who had spent the night within the city appeared at its gates. The general terror was shown ludicrously enough when they burst in and taking the panic-stricken knights of the royal household in rough horse-play by the beard promised to be their equals and good comrades in the days to come. But the horse-play changed into dreadful earnest when they found that Richard had escaped their grasp, and the discovery of Archbishop Sudbury and other ministers in the chapel changed their fury into a cry for blood. The Primate was dragged from his sanctuary and beheaded. The same vengeance was wreaked on the Treasurer and the Chief Commissioner for the levy of the hated poll-tax, the merchant Richard Lyons who had been impeached by the Good Parliament. Richard meanwhile had ridden round the northern wall of the city to the Wardrobe near Blackfriars, and from this new refuge he opened his negotiations with the Kentish insurgents. Many of these dispersed at the news of the King's pledge to the men of Essex, but a body of thirty thousand still surrounded

Wat Tyler when Richard on the morning of the fifteenth encountered that leader by a mere chance at Smithfield. Hot words passed between his train and the peasant chieftain who advanced to confer with the King, and a threat from Tyler brought on a brief struggle in which the Mayor of London, William Walworth, struck him with his dagger to the ground. "Kill! kill!" shouted the crowd, "they have slain our captain!" But Richard faced the Kentishmen with the same cool courage with which he faced the men of Essex. "What need ye, my masters!" cried the boy-king as he rode boldly up to the front of the bowmen. "I am your Captain and your King; Follow me!" The hopes of the peasants centred in the young sovereign; one aim of their rising had been to free him from the evil counsellors who, as they believed, abused his youth; and at his word they followed him with a touching loyalty and trust till he entered the Tower. His mother welcomed him within its walls with tears of joy. "Rejoice and praise God," Richard answered, "for I have recovered to-day my heritage which was lost and the realm of England!" But he was compelled to give the same pledge of freedom to the Kentishmen as at Mile-end, and it was only after receiving his letters of pardon and emancipation that the yeomen dispersed to their homes.

The general revolt.

The revolt indeed was far from being at an end. As the news of the rising ran through the country the discontent almost everywhere broke into flame. There were outbreaks in every shire south of the Thames as far westward as Devonshire. In the north tumults broke out at Beverley and Scarborough, and Yorkshire and Lancashire made ready to rise. The eastern counties were in one wild turmoil of revolt. At Cambridge the townsmen burned the charters of the University and attacked the colleges. A body of peasants occupied St. Alban's. In Norfolk a Norwich artizan, called John the Litster or Dyer, took the title of King of the Commons, and marching

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through the country at the head of a mass of peasants compelled the nobles whom he captured to act as his meat-tasters and to serve him on their knees during his repast. The story of St. Edmundsbury shows us what was going on in Suffolk. Ever since the accession of Edward the Third the townsmen and the villeins of their lands around had been at war with the abbot and his monks. The old and more oppressive servitude had long passed away, but the later abbots had set themselves against the policy of concession and conciliation which had brought about this advance towards freedom. The gates of the town were still in the abbot's hands. He had succeeded in enforcing his claim to the wardship of all orphans born within his domain. From claims such as these the town could never feel itself safe so long as mysterious charters from Pope or King, interpreted cunningly by the wit of the new lawyer class, lay stored in the abbey archives. But the archives contained other and hardly less formidable documents than these. Untroubled by the waste of war, the religious houses profited more than any other landowners by the general growth of wealth. They had become great proprietors, money lenders to their tenants, extortionate as the Jew whom they had banished from their land. There were few townsmen of St. Edmund's who had not some bonds laid up in the abbey registry. In 1327 one band of debtors had a covenant lying there for the payment of five hundred marks, and fifty casks of wine. Another company of the wealthier burgesses were joint debtors on a bond for ten thousand pounds. The new spirit of commercial activity joined with the troubles of the time to throw the whole community into the abbot's hands.

Saint Edmundsbury.

We can hardly wonder that riots, lawsuits, and royal commissions marked the relation of the town and abbey under the first two Edwards. Under the third came an open conflict. In 1327 the townsmen burst into the great house, drove the monks into the choir, and dragged them thence to the town prison. The abbey itself was sacked;

chalices, missals, chasubles, tunicles, altar frontals, the books of the library, the very vats and dishes of the kitchen, all disappeared. The monks estimated their losses at ten thousand pounds. But the townsmen aimed at higher booty than this. The monks were brought back from prison to their own chapter-house, and the spoil of their registry, papal bulls and royal charters, deeds and bonds and mortgages, were laid before them. Amidst the wild threats of the mob they were forced to execute a grant of perfect freedom and of a gild to the town as well as of free release to their debtors. Then they were left masters of the ruined house. But all control over town or land was gone. Through spring and summer no rent or fine was paid. The bailiffs and other officers of the abbey did not dare to show their faces in the streets. News came at last that the abbot was in London, appealing for redress to the court, and the whole county was at once on fire. A crowd of rustics, maddened at the thought of revived claims of serfage, of interminable suits of law, poured into the streets of the town. From thirty-two of the neighbouring villages the priests marched at the head of their flocks as on a new crusade. The wild mass of men, women, and children, twenty thousand in all, as men guessed, rushed again on the abbey, and for four November days the work of destruction went on unhindered. When gate, stables, granaries, kitchen, infirmary, hostelry had gone up in flames, the multitude swept away to the granges and barns of the abbey farms. Their plunder shows what vast agricultural proprietors the monks had become. A thousand horses, a hundred and twenty plough-oxen, two hundred cows, three hundred bullocks, three hundred hogs, ten thousand sheep were driven off, and granges and barns burned to the ground. It was judged afterwards that sixty thousand pounds would hardly cover the loss.

Weak as was the government of Mortimer and

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Isabella, the appeal of the abbot against this outrage was promptly heeded. A royal force quelled the riot, thirty carts full of prisoners were despatched to Norwich; twenty-four of the chief townsmen with thirty-two of the village priests were convicted as aiders and abettors of the attack on the abbey, and twenty were summarily hanged. Nearly two hundred persons remained under sentence of outlawry, and for five weary years their case dragged on in the King's courts. At last matters ended in a ludicrous outrage. Irritated by repeated breaches of promise on the abbot's part, the outlawed burgesses seized him as he lay in his manor of Chevington, robbed and bound him, and carried him off to London. There he was hurried from street to street lest his hiding-place should be detected till opportunity offered for shipping him off to Brabant. The Primate and the Pope levelled their excommunications against the abbot's captors in vain, and though he was at last discovered and brought home it was probably with some pledge of the arrangement which followed in 1332. The enormous damages assessed by the royal justices were remitted, the outlawry of the townsmen was reversed, the prisoners were released. On the other hand the deeds which had been stolen were again replaced in the archives of the abbey, and the charters which had been extorted from the monks were formally cancelled.

St. Edmundsbury in 1381.

The spirit of townsmen and villeins remained crushed by their failure, and throughout the reign of Edward the Third the oppression against which they had risen went on without a check. It was no longer the rough blow of sheer force; it was the more delicate but more pitiless tyranny of the law. At Richard's accession Prior John of Cambridge in the vacancy of the abbot was in charge of the house. The prior was a man skilled in all the arts of his day. In sweetness of voice, in knowledge of sacred song, his eulogists pronounced him superior to Orpheus, to Nero, and to one yet more illustrious in the Bury cloister though obscure to us, the Breton Belgabred. John was

"industrious and subtle," and subtlety and industry found their scope in suit after suit with the burgesses and farmers around him. "Faithfully he strove" says the monastic chronicler "with the villeins of Bury for the rights of his house." The townsmen he owned specially as his "adversaries," but it was the rustics who were to show what a hate he had won. On the fifteenth of June, the day of Wat Tyler's fall, the howl of a great multitude round his manor house at Mildenhall broke roughly on the chauntings of Prior John. He strove to fly, but he was betrayed by his own servants, judged in rude mockery of the law by villein and bondsman, condemned and killed. The corpse lay naked in the open field while the mob poured unresisted into Bury. Bearing the prior's head on a lance before them through the streets, the frenzied throng at last reached the gallows where the head of one of the royal judges, Sir John Cavendish, was already impaled; and pressing the cold lips together in mockery of their friendship set them side by side. Another head soon joined them. The abbey gates were burst open, and the cloister filled with a maddened crowd, howling for a new victim, John Lackenheath, the warder of the barony. Few knew him as he stood among the group of trembling monks, but he courted death with a contemptuous courage. "I am the man you seek," he said, stepping forward; and in a minute, with a mighty roar of "Devil's son! Monk! Traitor!" he was swept to the gallows, and his head hacked from his shoulders. Then the crowd rolled back again to the abbey gate, and summoned the monks before them. They told them that now for a long time they had oppressed their fellows, the burgesses of Bury; wherefore they willed that in the sight of the Commons they should forthwith surrender their bonds and charters. The monks brought the parchments to the market-place; many which were demanded they swore they could not find. A compromise was at last patched up; and it was agreed that the charters should be surrendered till the future abbot

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should confirm the liberties of the town. Then, unable to do more, the crowd ebbed away.

Close of the rising.

A scene less violent, but even more picturesque, went on the same day at St. Alban's. William Grindecobbe, the leader of its townsmen, returned with one of the charters of emancipation which Richard had granted after his interview at Mile-end to the men of Essex and Hertfordshire, and breaking into the abbey precincts at the head of the burghers, forced the abbot to deliver up the charters which bound the town in bondage to his house. But a more striking proof of servitude than any charters could give remained in the mill-stones which after a long suit at law had been adjudged to the abbey and placed within its cloister as a triumphant witness that no townsman might grind corn within the domain of the abbey save at the abbot's mill. Bursting into the cloister, the burghers now tore the mill-stones from the floor, and broke them into small pieces, "like blessed bread in church," which each might carry off to show something of the day when their freedom was won again. But it was hardly won when it was lost anew. The quiet withdrawal and dispersion of the peasant armies with their charters of emancipation gave courage to the nobles. Their panic passed away. The warlike Bishop of Norwich fell lance in hand on Litster's camp, and scattered the peasants of Norfolk at the first shock. Richard with an army of forty thousand men marched in triumph through Kent and Essex, and spread terror by the ruthlessness of his executions. At Waltham he was met by the display of his own recent charters and a protest from the Essex men that "they were so far as freedom went the peers of their lords." But they were to learn the worth of a king's word. "Villeins you were," answered Richard, "and villeins you are. In bondage you shall abide, and that not your old bondage, but a worse!" The stubborn resistance which he met showed that the temper of the people was not easily broken. The villagers of

Billericay threw themselves into the woods and fought two hard fights before they were reduced to submission. It was only by threats of death that verdicts of guilty could be wrung from Essex jurors when the leaders of the revolt were brought before them. Grindecobbe was offered his life if he would persuade his followers at St. Alban's to restore the charters they had wrung from the monks. He turned bravely to his fellow-townsmen and bade them take no thought for his trouble. "If I die," he said, "I shall die for the cause of the freedom we have won, counting myself happy to end my life by such a martyrdom. Do then to-day as you would have done had I been killed yesterday." But repression went pitilessly on, and through the summer and the autumn seven thousand men are said to have perished on the gallows or the field.

CHAPTER IV.

RICHARD THE SECOND.

1381—1400.

Results of the Peasant Revolt.

TERRIBLE as were the measures of repression which followed the Peasant Revolt, and violent as was the passion of reaction which raged among the proprietary classes at its close, the end of the rising was in fact secured. The words of Grindecobbe ere his death were a prophecy which time fulfilled. Cancel charters of manumission as the council might, serfage was henceforth a doomed and perishing thing. The dread of another outbreak hung round the employer. The attempts to bring back obsolete services quietly died away. The old process of enfranchisement went quietly on. During the century and a half which followed the Peasant Revolt villeinage died out so rapidly that it became a rare and antiquated thing. The class of small freeholders sprang fast out of the wreck of it into numbers and importance. In twenty years more they were in fact recognized as the basis of our electoral system in every English county. The Labour Statutes proved as ineffective as of old in enchaining labour or reducing its price. A hundred years after the Black Death the wages of an English labourer was sufficient to purchase twice the amount of the necessaries of life which could have been obtained for the wages paid under Edward the Third. The incidental descriptions of the life of the working classes which we find in Piers Ploughman show that this increase of social comfort

had been going on even during the troubled period which preceded the outbreak of the peasants, and it went on faster after the revolt was over. But inevitable as such a progress was, every step of it was taken in the teeth of the wealthier classes. Their temper indeed at the close of the rising was that of men frenzied by panic and the taste of blood. They scouted all notion of concession. The stubborn will of the conquered was met by as stubborn a will in their conquerors. The royal Council showed its sense of the danger of a mere policy of resistance by submitting the question of enfranchisement to the Parliament which assembled in November 1381 with words which suggested a compromise. "If you desire to enfranchise and set at liberty the said serfs," ran the royal message, "by your common assent, as the King has been informed that some of you desire, he will consent to your prayer." But no thoughts of compromise influenced the landowners in their reply. The King's grant and letters, the Parliament answered with perfect truth, were legally null and void: their serfs were their goods, and the King could not take their goods from them but by their own consent. "And this consent," they ended, "we have never given and never will give, were we all to die in one day." Their temper indeed expressed itself in legislation which was a fit sequel to the Statutes of Labourers. They forbade the child of any tiller of the soil to be apprenticed in a town. They prayed the King to ordain "that no bondman nor bondwoman shall place their children at school, as has been done, so as to advance their children in the world by their going into the church." The new colleges which were being founded at the Universities at this moment closed their gates upon villeins.

Religious reaction.

The panic which produced this frenzied reaction against all projects of social reform produced inevitably as frenzied a panic of reaction against all plans for religious reform. Wyclif had been supported by the Lancastrian party till the very eve of the Peasant Revolt. But with the rising

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his whole work seemed suddenly undone. The quarrel between the baronage and the Church on which his political action had as yet been grounded was hushed in the presence of a common danger. His "poor preachers" were looked upon as missionaries of socialism. The friars charged Wyclif with being a "sower of strife, who by his serpentlike instigation had set the serf against his lord," and though he tossed back the charge with disdain he had to bear a suspicion which was justified by the conduct of some of his followers. John Ball, who had figured in the front rank of the revolt, was falsely named as one of his adherents, and was alleged to have denounced in his last hour the conspiracy of the "Wyclifites." Wyclif's most prominent scholar, Nicholas Herford, was said to have openly approved the brutal murder of Archbishop Sudbury. Whatever belief such charges might gain, it is certain that from this moment all plans for the reorganization of the Church were confounded in the general odium which attached to the projects of the peasant leaders, and that any hope of ecclesiastical reform at the hands of the baronage and the Parliament was at an end. But even if the Peasant Revolt had not deprived Wyclif of the support of the aristocratic party with whom he had hitherto co-operated, their alliance must have been dissolved by the new theological position which he had already taken up. Some months before the outbreak of the insurrection he had by one memorable step passed from the position of a reformer of the discipline and political relations of the Church to that of a protester against its cardinal beliefs. If there was one doctrine upon which the supremacy of the Mediæval Church rested, it was the doctrine of Transubstantiation. It was by his exclusive right to the performance of the miracle which was wrought in the mass that the lowliest priest was raised high above princes. With the formal denial of the doctrine of Transubstantiation which Wyclif issued in the spring of 1381 began that great movement of religious revolt which ended more than

a century after in the establishment of religious freedom by severing the mass of the Teutonic peoples from the general body of the Catholic Church. The act was the bolder that he stood utterly alone. The University of Oxford, in which his influence had been hitherto all-powerful, at once condemned him. John of Gaunt enjoined him to be silent. Wyclif was presiding as Doctor of Divinity over some disputations in the schools of the Augustinian Canons when his academical condemnation was publicly read, but though startled for the moment he at once challenged Chancellor or doctor to disprove the conclusions at which he had arrived. The prohibition of the Duke of Lancaster he met by an open avowal of his teaching, a confession which closes proudly with the quiet words, "I believe that in the end the truth will conquer."

Rise of Lollardry.

For the moment his courage dispelled the panic around him. The University responded to his appeal, and by displacing his opponents from office tacitly adopted his cause. But Wyclif no longer looked for support to the learned or wealthier classes on whom he had hitherto relied. He appealed, and the appeal is memorable as the first of such a kind in our history, to England at large. With an amazing industry he issued tract after tract in the tongue of the people itself. The dry, syllogistic Latin, the abstruse and involved argument which the great doctor had addressed to his academic hearers, were suddenly flung aside, and by a transition which marks the wonderful genius of the man the schoolman was transformed into the pamphleteer. If Chaucer is the father of our later English poetry, Wyclif is the father of our later English prose. The rough, clear, homely English of his tracts, the speech of the ploughman and the trader of the day though coloured with the picturesque phraseology of the Bible, is in its literary use as distinctly a creation of his own as the style in which he embodied it, the terse vehement sentences, the stinging sarcasms, the hard antitheses which roused the dullest mind like a whip. Once fairly freed

from the trammels of unquestioning belief, Wyclif's mind worked fast in its career of scepticism. Pardons, indulgences, absolutions, pilgrimages to the shrines of the saints, worship of their images, worship of the saints themselves, were successively denied. A formal appeal to the Bible as the one ground of faith, coupled with an assertion of the right of every instructed man to examine the Bible for himself, threatened the very groundwork of the older dogmatism with ruin. Nor were these daring denials confined to the small circle of scholars who still clung to him. The "Simple Priests" were active in the diffusion of their master's doctrines, and how rapid their progress must have been we may see from the panic-struck exaggerations of their opponents. A few years later they complained that the followers of Wyclif abounded everywhere and in all classes, among the baronage, in the cities, among the peasantry of the country-side, even in the monastic cell itself. "Every second man one meets is a Lollard."

Lollardry at Oxford.

"Lollard," a word which probably means "idle babbler," was the nickname of scorn with which the orthodox Churchmen chose to insult their assailants. But this rapid increase changed their scorn into vigorous action. In 1382 Courtenay, who had now become Archbishop, summoned a council at Blackfriars and formally submitted twenty-four propositions drawn from Wyclif's works. An earthquake in the midst of the proceedings terrified every prelate but the resolute Primate; the expulsion of ill humours from the earth, he said, was of good omen for the expulsion of ill humours from the Church; and the condemnation was pronounced. Then the Archbishop turned fiercely upon Oxford as the fount and centre of the new heresies. In an English sermon at St. Frideswide's Nicholas Herford had asserted the truth of Wyclif's doctrines, and Courtenay ordered the Chancellor to silence him and his adherents on pain of being himself treated as a heretic. The Chancellor fell back on the liberties of the

University, and appointed as preacher another Wyclifite, Repyngdon, who did not hesitate to style the Lollards "holy priests," and to affirm that they were protected by John of Gaunt. Party spirit meanwhile ran high among the students. The bulk of them sided with the Lollard leaders, and a Carmelite, Peter Stokes, who had procured the Archbishop's letters, cowered panic stricken in his chamber while the Chancellor, protected by an escort of a hundred townsmen, listened approvingly to Repyngdon's defiance. "I dare go no further," wrote the poor Friar to the Archbishop, "for fear of death;" but he mustered courage at last to descend into the schools where Repyngdon was now maintaining that the clerical order was "better when it was but nine years old than now that it has grown to a thousand years and more." The appearance however of scholars in arms again drove Stokes to fly in despair to Lambeth, while a new heretic in open Congregation maintained Wyclif's denial of Transubstantiation. "There is no idolatry," cried William James, "save in the Sacrament of the Altar." "You speak like a wise man," replied the Chancellor, Robert Rygge. Courtenay however was not the man to bear defiance tamely, and his summons to Lambeth wrested a submission from Rygge which was only accepted on his pledge to suppress the Lollardism of the University. "I dare not publish them, on fear of death," exclaimed the Chancellor when Courtenay handed him his letters of condemnation. "Then is your University an open *fautor* of heretics" retorted the Primate "if it suffers not the Catholic truth to be proclaimed within its bounds." The royal Council supported the Archbishop's injunction, but the publication of the decrees at once set Oxford on fire. The scholars threatened death against the friars, "crying that they wished to destroy the University." The masters suspended Henry Crump from teaching as a troubler of the public peace for calling the Lollards "heretics." The Crown however at last stepped in to Courtenay's aid, and a royal writ ordered the

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instant banishment of all favourers of Wyclif with the seizure and destruction of all Lollard books on pain of forfeiture of the University's privileges. The threat produced its effect. Herford and Repyngdon appealed in vain to John of Gaunt for protection; the Duke himself denounced them as heretics against the Sacrament of the Altar, and after much evasion they were forced to make a formal submission. Within Oxford itself the suppression of Lollardism was complete, but with the death of religious freedom all trace of intellectual life suddenly disappears. The century which followed the triumph of Courtenay is the most barren in its annals, nor was the sleep of the University broken till the advent of the New Learning restored to it some of the life and liberty which the Primate had so roughly trodden out.

Wyclif's Bible.

Nothing marks more strongly the grandeur of Wyclif's position as the last of the great schoolmen than the reluctance of so bold a man as Courtenay even after his triumph over Oxford to take extreme measures against the head of Lollardry. Wyclif, though summoned, had made no appearance before the "Council of the Earthquake." "Pontius Pilate and Herod are made friends to-day," was his bitter comment on the new union which proved to have sprung up between the prelates and the monastic orders who had so long been at variance with each other; "since they have made a heretic of Christ, it is an easy inference for them to count simple Christians heretics." He seems indeed to have been sick at the moment, but the announcement of the final sentence roused him to life again. He petitioned the King and Parliament that he might be allowed freely to prove the doctrines he had put forth, and turning with characteristic energy to the attack of his assailants, he asked that all religious vows might be suppressed, that tithes might be diverted to the maintenance of the poor and the clergy maintained by the free alms of their flocks, that the Statutes of Provisors and Præmunire might be enforced

against the Papacy, that Churchmen might be declared incapable of secular offices, and imprisonment for excommunication cease. Finally in the teeth of the council's condemnation he demanded that the doctrine of the Eucharist which he advocated might be freely taught. If he appeared in the following year before the convocation at Oxford it was to perplex his opponents by a display of scholastic logic which permitted him to retire without any retractation of his sacramental heresy. For the time his opponents seemed satisfied with his expulsion from the University, but in his retirement at Lutterworth he was forging during these troubled years the great weapon which, wielded by other hands than his own, was to produce so terrible an effect on the triumphant hierarchy. An earlier translation of the Scriptures, in part of which he was aided by his scholar Herford, was being revised and brought to the second form which is better known as "Wyclif's Bible" when death drew near. The appeal of the prelates to Rome was answered at last by a Brief ordering him to appear at the Papal Court. His failing strength exhausted itself in a sarcastic reply which explained that his refusal to comply with the summons simply sprang from broken health. "I am always glad," ran the ironical answer, "to explain my faith to any one, and above all to the Bishop of Rome; for I take it for granted that if it be orthodox he will confirm it, if it be erroneous he will correct it. I assume too that as chief Vicar of Christ upon earth the Bishop of Rome is of all mortal men most bound to the law of Christ's Gospel, for among the disciples of Christ a majority is not reckoned by simply counting heads in the fashion of this world, but according to the imitation of Christ on either side. Now Christ during His life upon earth was of all men the poorest, casting from Him all worldly authority. I deduce from these premisses as a simple counsel of my own that the Pope should surrender all temporal authority to the civil power and advise his clergy to do the same." The boldness of his

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words sprang perhaps from a knowledge that his end was near. The terrible strain on energies enfeebled by age and study had at last brought its inevitable result, and a stroke of paralysis while Wyclif was hearing mass in his parish church of Lutterworth was followed on the next day by his death.

The Lollard movement.

The persecution of Courtenay deprived the religious reform of its more learned adherents and of the support of the Universities. Wyclif's death robbed it of its head at a moment when little had been done save a work of destruction. From that moment Lollardism ceased to be in any sense an organized movement and crumbled into a general spirit of revolt. All the religious and social discontent of the times floated instinctively to this new centre. The socialist dreams of the peasantry, the new and keener spirit of personal morality, the hatred of the friars, the jealousy of the great lords towards the prelacy, the fanaticism of the reforming zealot were blended together in a common hostility to the Church and a common resolve to substitute personal religion for its dogmatic and ecclesiastical system. But it was this want of organization, this looseness and fluidity of the new movement, that made it penetrate through every class of society. Women as well as men became the preachers of the new sect. Lollardry had its own schools, its own books; its pamphlets were passed everywhere from hand to hand; scurrilous ballads which revived the old attacks of "Golias" in the Angevin times upon the wealth and luxury of the clergy were sung at every corner. Nobles like the Earl of Salisbury and at a later time Sir John Oldcastle placed themselves openly at the head of the cause and threw open their gates as a refuge for its missionaries. London in its hatred of the clergy became fiercely Lollard, and defended a Lollard preacher who ventured to advocate the new doctrines from the pulpit of St. Paul's. One of its mayors, John of Northampton, showed the influence of the new morality by the Puritan

spirit in which he dealt with the morals of the city. Compelled to act, as he said, by the remissness of the clergy who connived for money at every kind of debauchery, he arrested the loose women, cut off their hair, and carted them through the streets as objects of public scorn. But the moral spirit of the new movement, though infinitely its grander side, was less dangerous to the Church than its open repudiation of the older doctrines and systems of Christendom. Out of the floating mass of opinion which bore the name of Lollardry one faith gradually evolved itself, a faith in the sole authority of the Bible as a source of religious truth. The translation of Wyclif did its work. Scripture, complains a canon of Leicester, "became a vulgar thing, and more open to lay folk and women that knew how to read than it is wont to be to clerks themselves." Consequences which Wyclif had perhaps shrunk from drawing were boldly drawn by his disciples. The Church was declared to have become apostate, its priesthood was denounced as no priesthood, its sacraments as idolatry.

Lollardry and the Church.

It was in vain that the clergy attempted to stifle the new movement by their old weapon of persecution. The jealousy entertained by the baronage and gentry of every pretension of the Church to secular power foiled its efforts to make persecution effective. At the moment of the Peasant Revolt Courtenay procured the enactment of a statute which commissioned the sheriffs to seize all persons convicted before the bishops of preaching heresy. But the statute was repealed in the next session, and the Commons added to the bitterness of the blow by their protest that they considered it "in nowise their interest to be more under the jurisdiction of the prelates or more bound by them than their ancestors had been in times past." Heresy indeed was still a felony by the common law, and if as yet we meet with no instances of the punishment of heretics by the fire it was because the threat of such a death was commonly followed by the recantation of the Lollard. But the restriction of each bishop's jurisdiction within the

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limits of his own diocese made it impossible to arrest the wandering preachers of the new doctrine, and the civil punishment—even if it had been sanctioned by public opinion—seems to have long fallen into desuetude. Experience proved to the prelates that few sheriffs would arrest on the mere warrant of an ecclesiastical officer, and that no royal court would issue the writ "for the burning of a heretic" on a bishop's requisition. But powerless as the efforts of the Church were for purposes of repression, they were effective in rousing the temper of the Lollards into a bitter fanaticism. The heretics delighted in outraging the religious sense of their day. One Lollard gentleman took home the sacramental wafer and lunched on it with wine and oysters. Another flung some images of the saints into his cellar. The Lollard preachers stirred up riots by the virulence of their preaching against the friars. But they directed even fiercer invectives against the wealth and secularity of the great Churchmen. In a formal petition which was laid before Parliament in 1395 they mingled denunciations of the riches of the clergy with an open profession of disbelief in transubstantiation, priesthood, pilgrimages, and image worship, and a demand, which illustrates the strange medley of opinions which jostled together in the new movement, that war might be declared unchristian and that trades such as those of the goldsmith or the armourer, which were contrary to apostolical poverty, might be banished from the realm. They contended (and it is remarkable that a Parliament of the next reign adopted the statement) that from the superfluous revenues of the Church, if once they were applied to purposes of general utility, the King might maintain fifteen earls, fifteen hundred knights, and six thousand squires, besides endowing a hundred hospitals for the relief of the poor.

Disasters of the War.

The distress of the landowners, the general disorganization of the country, in every part of which bands of marauders were openly defying the law, the panic of the Church and

of society at large as the projects of the Lollards shaped themselves into more daring and revolutionary forms, added a fresh keenness to the national discontent at the languid and inefficient prosecution of the war. The junction of the French and Spanish fleets had made them masters of the seas, and what fragments were left of Guienne lay at their mercy. The royal Council strove to detach the House of Luxemburg from the French alliance by winning for Richard the hand of Anne, a daughter of the late Emperor Charles the Fourth who had fled at Creçy, and sister of King Wenzel of Bohemia who was now King of the Romans. But the marriage remained without political result, save that the Lollard books which were sent into their native country by the Bohemian servants of the new queen stirred the preaching of John Huss and the Hussite wars. Nor was English policy more successful in Flanders. Under Philip van Arteveldt, the son of the leader of 1345, the Flemish towns again sought the friendship of England against France, but at the close of 1382 the towns were defeated and their leader slain in the great French victory of Rosbecque. An expedition to Flanders in the following year under the warlike Bishop of Norwich turned out a mere plunder-raid and ended in utter failure. A short truce only gave France the leisure to prepare a counter-blow by the despatch of a small but well-equipped force under John de Vienne to Scotland in 1385. Thirty thousand Scots joined in the advance of this force over the border: and though northern England rose with a desperate effort and an English army penetrated as far as Edinburgh in the hope of bringing the foe to battle it was forced to fall back without an encounter. Meanwhile France dealt a more terrible blow in the reduction of Ghent. The one remaining market for English commerce was thus closed up, while the forces which should have been employed in saving Ghent and in the protection of the English shores against the threat of invasion were squandered by John of Gaunt in a war which he was

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carrying on along the Spanish frontier in pursuit of the visionary crown which he claimed in his wife's right. The enterprize showed that the Duke had now abandoned the hope of directing affairs at home and was seeking a new sphere of activity abroad. To drive him from the realm had been from the close of the Peasant Revolt the steady purpose of the councillors who now surrounded the young King, of his favourite Robert de Vere and his Chancellor Michael de la Pole, who was raised in 1385 to the Earldom of Suffolk. The Duke's friends were expelled from office; John of Northampton, the head of his adherents among the Commons, was thrown into prison; the Duke himself was charged with treason and threatened with arrest. In 1386 John of Gaunt abandoned the struggle and sailed for Spain.

Temper of the Court.

Richard himself took part in these measures against the Duke. He was now twenty, handsome and golden-haired, with a temper capable of great actions and sudden bursts of energy but indolent and unequal. The conception of kingship in which he had been reared made him regard the constitutional advance which had gone on during the war as an invasion of the rights of his Crown. He looked on the nomination of the royal Council and the great officers of state by the two Houses or the supervision of the royal expenditure by the Commons as infringements on the prerogative which only the pressure of the war and the weakness of a minority had forced the Crown to bow to. The judgement of his councillors was one with that of the King. Vere was no mere royal favourite; he was a great noble and of ancient lineage. Michael de la Pole was a man of large fortune and an old servant of the Crown; he had taken part in the war for thirty years, and had been admiral and captain of Calais. But neither were men to counsel the young King wisely in his effort to obtain independence at once of Parliament and of the great nobles. His first aim had been to break the pressure of the royal house itself, and in his encounter with John

of Gaunt he had proved successful. But the departure of the Duke of Lancaster only called to the front his brother and his son. Thomas of Woodstock, the Duke of Gloucester, had inherited much of the lands and the influence of the old house of Bohun. Round Henry, Earl of Derby, the son of John of Gaunt by Blanche of Lancaster, the old Lancastrian party of constitutional opposition was once more forming itself. The favour shown to the followers of Wyclif at the Court threw on the side of this new opposition the bulk of the bishops and Churchmen. Richard himself showed no sympathy with the Lollards, but the action of her Bohemian servants shows the tendencies of his Queen. Three members of the royal Council were patrons of the Lollards, and the Earl of Salisbury, a favourite with the King, was their avowed head. The Commons displayed no hostility to the Lollards nor any zeal for the Church; but the lukewarm prosecution of the war, the profuse expenditure of the Court, and above all the manifest will of the King to free himself from Parliamentary control, estranged the Lower House. Richard's haughty words told their own tale. When the Parliament of 1385 called for an enquiry every year into the royal household, the King replied he would enquire when he pleased. When it prayed to know the names of the officers of state, he answered that he would change them at his will.

The Lords Appellant.

The burthen of such answers and of the policy they revealed fell on the royal councillors, and the departure of John of Gaunt forced the new opposition into vigorous action. The Parliament of 1386 called for the removal of Suffolk. Richard replied that he would not for such a prayer dismiss a turnspit of his kitchen. The Duke of Gloucester and Bishop Arundel of Ely were sent by the Houses as their envoys, and warned the King that should a ruler refuse to govern with the advice of his lords and by mad counsels work out his private purposes it was lawful to depose him. The threat secured Suffolk's

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removal; he was impeached for corruption and maladministration, and condemned to forfeiture and imprisonment. It was only by submitting to the nomination of a Continual Council, with the Duke of Gloucester at its head, that Richard could obtain a grant of subsidies. But the Houses were no sooner broken up than Suffolk was released, and in 1387 the young King rode through the country calling on the sheriffs to raise men against the barons, and bidding them suffer no knight of the shire to be returned for the next Parliament "save one whom the King and his Council chose." The general ill-will foiled both his efforts: and he was forced to take refuge in an opinion of five of the judges that the Continual Council was unlawful, the sentence on Suffolk erroneous, and that the Lords and Commons had no power to remove a King's servant. Gloucester answered the challenge by taking up arms, and a general refusal to fight for the King forced Richard once more to yield. A terrible vengeance was taken on his supporters in the recent schemes. In the Parliament of 1388 Gloucester, with the four Earls of Derby, Arundel, Warwick, and Nottingham appealed on a charge of high treason Suffolk and De Vere, the Archbishop of York, the Chief Justice Tresilian, and Sir Nicholas Bramber. The first two fled, Suffolk to France, De Vere after a skirmish at Radcot Bridge to Ireland; but the Archbishop was deprived of his see, Bramber beheaded, and Tresilian hanged. The five judges were banished, and Sir Simon Burley with three other members of the royal household sent to the block.

Richard's rule.

At the prayer of the "Wonderful Parliament," as some called this assembly, or as others with more justice "The Merciless Parliament," it was provided that all officers of state should henceforth be named in Parliament or by the Continual Council. Gloucester remained at the head of the latter body, but his power lasted hardly a year. In May 1389 Richard found himself strong enough to break down the government by a word. Entering the Council

he suddenly asked his uncle how old he was. "Your highness," answered Gloucester, "is in your twenty-second year!" "Then I am old enough to manage my own affairs," said Richard coolly; "I have been longer under guardianship than any ward in my realm. I thank you for your past services, my lords, but I need them no more." The resolution was welcomed by the whole country; and Richard justified the country's hopes by wielding his new power with singular wisdom and success. He refused to recall de Vere or the five judges. The intercession of John of Gaunt on his return from Spain brought about a full reconciliation with the Lords Appellant. A truce was concluded with France, and its renewal year after year enabled the King to lighten the burthen of taxation. Richard announced his purpose to govern by advice of Parliament; he soon restored the Lords Appellant to his Council, and committed the chief offices of state to great Churchmen like Wykeham and Arundel. A series of statutes showed the activity of the Houses. A Statute of Provisors which re-enacted those of Edward the Third was passed in 1390; the Statute of Præmunire, which punished the obtaining of bulls or other instruments from Rome with forfeiture, in 1393. The lords were bridled anew by a Statute of Maintenance, which forbade their violently supporting other men's causes in courts of justice or giving "livery" to a host of retainers. The Statute of Uses in 1391, which rendered illegal the devices which had been invented to frustrate that of Mortmain, showed the same resolve to deal firmly with the Church. A reform of the staple and other mercantile enactments proved the King's care for trade. Throughout the legislation of these eight years we see the same tone of coolness and moderation. Eager as he was to win the good-will of the Parliament and the Church, Richard refused to bow to the panic of the landowners or to second the persecution of the priesthood. The demands of the Parliament that education should be denied to the sons

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of villeins was refused. Lollardry as a social danger was held firmly at bay, and in 1387 the King ordered Lollard books to be seized and brought before the Council. But the royal officers showed little zeal in aiding the bishops to seize or punish the heretical teachers.

French and English.

It was in the period of peace which was won for the country by the wisdom and decision of its young King that England listened to the voice of her first great singer. The work of Chaucer marks the final settlement of the English tongue. The close of the great movement towards national unity which had been going on ever since the Conquest was shown in the middle of the fourteenth century by the disuse, even amongst the nobler classes, of the French tongue. In spite of the efforts of the grammar schools and of the strength of fashion English won its way throughout the reign of Edward the Third to its final triumph in that of his grandson. It was ordered to be used in courts of law in 1362 "because the French tongue is much unknown," and in the following year it was employed by the Chancellor in opening Parliament. Bishops began to preach in English, and the English tracts of Wyclif made it once more a literary tongue. We see the general advance in two passages from writers of Edward's and Richard's reigns. "Children in school" says Higden, a writer of the first period, "against the usage and manner of all other nations be compelled for to leave their own language and for to construe their lessons and their things in French, and so they have since the Normans first came into England. Also gentlemen children be taught for to speak French from the time that they be rocked in their cradle, and know how to speak and play with a child's toy; and uplandish (or country) men will liken themselves to gentlemen, and strive with great busyness to speak French for to be more told of." "This manner," adds John of Trevisa, Higden's translator in Richard's time, "was much used before the first murrain (the Black Death of 1349), and is since somewhat changed.

For John Cornwal, a master of grammar, changed the lore in grammar school and construing of French into English; and Richard Pencrych learned this manner of teaching of him, as other men did of Pencrych. So that now, the year of our Lord 1385 and of the second King Richard after the Conquest nine, in all the grammar schools of England children leaveth French, and construeth and learneth in English. Also gentlemen have now much left for to teach their children French."

Chaucer.

This drift towards a general use of the national tongue told powerfully on literature. The influence of the French romances everywhere tended to make French the one literary language at the opening of the fourteenth century, and in England this influence had been backed by the French tone of the court of Henry the Third and the three Edwards. But at the close of the reign of Edward the Third the long French romances needed to be translated even for knightly hearers. "Let clerks indite in Latin," says the author of the "Testament of Love," "and let Frenchmen in their French also indite their quaint terms, for it is kindly to their mouths; and let us show our fantasies in such wordes as we learned of our mother's tongue." But the new national life afforded nobler materials than "fantasies" now for English literature. With the completion of the work of national unity had come the completion of the work of national freedom. The vigour of English life showed itself in the wide extension of commerce, in the progress of the towns, and the upgrowth of a free yeomanry. It gave even nobler signs of its activity in the spirit of national independence and moral earnestness which awoke at the call of Wyclif. New forces of thought and feeling which were destined to tell on every age of our later history broke their way through the crust of feudalism in the socialist revolt of the Lollards, and a sudden burst of military glory threw its glamour over the age of Crecy and Poitiers. It is this new gladness of a great people which

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utters itself in the verse of Geoffrey Chaucer. Chaucer was born about 1340, the son of a London vintner who lived in Thames Street; and it was in London that the bulk of his life was spent. His family, though not noble, seems to have been of some importance, for from the opening of his career we find Chaucer in close connexion with the Court. At sixteen he was made page to the wife of Lionel of Clarence; at nineteen he first bore arms in the campaign of 1359. But he was luckless enough to be made prisoner; and from the time of his release after the treaty of Bretigny he took no further share in the military enterprizes of his time. He seems again to have returned to service about the Court, and it was now that his first poems made their appearance, the "Compleynte to Pity" in 1368, and in 1369 the "Death of Blanch the Duchesse," the wife of John of Gaunt who from this time at least may be looked upon as his patron. It may have been to John's influence that he owed his employment in seven diplomatic missions which were probably connected with the financial straits of the Crown. Three of these, in 1372, 1374, and 1378, carried him to Italy. He visited Genoa and the brilliant court of the Visconti at Milan; at Florence, where the memory of Dante, the "great master" whom he commemorates so reverently in his verse, was still living, he may have met Boccaccio; at Padua, like his own clerk of Oxenford, he possibly caught the story of Griseldis from the lips of Petrarca.

His Early Poems.

It was these visits to Italy which gave us the Chaucer whom we know. From that hour his work stands out in vivid contrast with the poetic literature from the heart of which it sprang. The long French romances were the product of an age of wealth and ease, of indolent curiosity, of a fanciful and self-indulgent sentiment. Of the great passions which gave life to the Middle Ages, that of religious enthusiasm had degenerated into the conceits of Mariolatry, that of war into the extravagances of Chivalry. Love indeed remained; it was the

one theme of troubadour and trouveur; but it was a love of refinement, of romantic follies, of scholastic discussions, of sensuous enjoyment—a plaything rather than a passion. Nature had to reflect the pleasant indolence of man; the song of the minstrel moved through a perpetual May-time; the grass was ever green; the music of the lark and the nightingale rang out from field and thicket. There was a gay avoidance of all that is serious, moral, or reflective in man's life: life was too amusing to be serious, too piquant, too sentimental, too full of interest and gaiety and chat. It was an age of talk: "mirth is none" says Chaucer's host "to ride on by the way dumb as a stone;" and the Trouveur aimed simply at being the most agreeable talker of his day. His romances, his rimes of Sir Tristram, his Romance of the Rose, are full of colour and fantasy, endless in detail, but with a sort of gorgeous idleness about their very length, the minuteness of their description of outer things, the vagueness of their touch when it passes to the subtler inner world.

It was with this literature that Chaucer had till now been familiar, and it was this which he followed in his earlier work. But from the time of his visits to Milan and Genoa his sympathies drew him not to the dying verse of France but to the new and mighty upgrowth of poetry in Italy. Dante's eagle looks at him from the sun. "Fraunces Petrark, the laureat poete," is to him one "whose rethorique sweete enluymned al Itail of poetrie." The "Troilus" which he produced about 1382 is an enlarged English version of Boccaccio's "Filostrato;" the Knight's Tale, whose first draft is of the same period, bears slight traces of his Teseide. It was indeed the "Decameron" which suggested the very form of the "Canterbury Tales," the earliest of which, such as those of the Doctor, the Man of Law, the Clerk, the Prioress, the Franklin, and the Squire, may probably be referred like the Parliament of Foules and the House of Fame to this time of Chaucer's life. But even while changing,

as it were, the front of English poetry Chaucer preserves his own distinct personality. If he quizzes in the rime of Sir Thopaz the wearisome idleness of the French romance he retains all that was worth retaining of the French temper, its rapidity and agility of movement, its lightness and brilliancy of touch, its airy mockery, its gaiety and good humour, its critical coolness and self-control. The French wit quickens in him more than in any English writer the sturdy sense and shrewdness of our national disposition, corrects its extravagance, and relieves its somewhat ponderous morality. If on the other hand he echoes the joyous carelessness of the Italian tale, he tempers it with the English seriousness. As he follows Boccaccio all his changes are on the side of purity; and when the Troilus of the Florentine ends with the old sneer at the changeableness of woman Chaucer bids us "look Godward," and dwells on the unchangeableness of Heaven.

The Canterbury Tales.

The genius of Chaucer however was neither French nor Italian, whatever element it might borrow from either literature, but English to the core; and from the year 1384 all trace of foreign influence dies away. Chaucer had now reached the climax of his poetic power. He was a busy, practical worker, Comptroller of the Customs in 1374, of the Petty Customs in 1382, a member of the Commons in the Parliament of 1386. The fall of the Duke of Lancaster from power may have deprived him of employment for a time, but from 1389 to 1391 he was Clerk of the Royal Works, busy with repairs and building at Westminster, Windsor, and the Tower. His air indeed was that of a student rather than of a man of the world. A single portrait has preserved for us his forked beard, his dark-coloured dress, the knife and pen-case at his girdle, and we may supplement this portrait by a few vivid touches of his own. The sly, elvish face, the quick walk, the plump figure and portly waist were those of a genial and humorous man; but men jested at his silence, his

abstraction, his love of study. "Thou lookest as thou wouldest find an hare," laughs the host, "and ever on the ground I see thee stare." He heard little of his neighbours' talk when office work in Thames Street was over. "Thou goest home to thy own house anon, and also dumb as a stone thou sittest at another book till fully dazed is thy look, and livest thus as an heremite, although," he adds slyly, "thy abstinence is lite," or little. But of this seeming abstraction from the world about him there is not a trace in Chaucer's verse. We see there how keen his observation was, how vivid and intense his sympathy with nature and the men among whom he moved. "Farewell, my book," he cried as spring came after winter and the lark's song roused him at dawn to spend hours gazing alone on the daisy whose beauty he sang. But field and stream and flower and bird, much as he loved them, were less to him than man. No poetry was ever more human than Chaucer's, none ever came more frankly and genially home to men than his "Canterbury Tales."

It was the continuation and revision of this work which mainly occupied him during the years from 1384 to 1390. Its best stories, those of the Miller, the Reeve, the Cook, the Wife of Bath, the Merchant, the Friar, the Nun, the Priest, and the Pardoner, are ascribed to this period, as well as the Prologue. The framework which Chaucer chose —that of a pilgrimage from London to Canterbury—not only enabled him to string these tales together, but lent itself admirably to the peculiar characteristics of his poetic temper, his dramatic versatility and the universality of his sympathy. His tales cover the whole field of mediæval poetry; the legend of the priest, the knightly romance, the wonder-tale of the traveller, the broad humour of the fabliau, allegory and apologue, all are there. He finds a yet wider scope for his genius in the persons who tell these stories, the thirty pilgrims who start in the May morning from the Tabard in Southwark —thirty distinct figures, representatives of every class of

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English society from the noble to the ploughman. We see the "verray perfight gentil knight" in cassock and coat of mail, with his curly-headed squire beside him, fresh as the May morning, and behind them the brown-faced yeoman in his coat and hood of green with a mighty bow in his hand. A group of ecclesiastics light up for us the mediæval church—the brawny hunt-loving monk, whose bridle jingles as loud and clear as the chapel-bell—the wanton friar, first among the beggars and harpers of the country side—the poor parson, threadbare, learned, and devout ("Christ's lore and his apostles twelve he taught, and first he followed it himself")—the summoner with his fiery face—the pardoner with his wallet "bret-full of pardons, come from Rome all hot"—the lively prioress with her courtly French lisp, her soft little red mouth, and "Amor vincit omnia" graven on her brooch. Learning is there in the portly person of the doctor of physic, rich with the profits of the pestilence—the busy serjeant-of-law, "that ever seemed busier than he was"—the hollow-cheeked clerk of Oxford with his love of books and short sharp sentences that disguise a latent tenderness which breaks out at last in the story of Griseldis. Around them crowd types of English industry; the merchant; the franklin in whose house "it snowed of meat and drink;" the sailor fresh from frays in the Channel; the buxom wife of Bath; the broad-shouldered miller; the haberdasher, carpenter, weaver, dyer, tapestry-maker, each in the livery of his craft; and last the honest ploughman who would dyke and delve for the poor without hire. It is the first time in English poetry that we are brought face to face not with characters or allegories or reminiscences of the past, but with living and breathing men, men distinct in temper and sentiment as in face or costume or mode of speech; and with this distinctness of each maintained throughout the story by a thousand shades of expression and action. It is the first time, too, that we meet with the dramatic power which not only creates each

character but combines it with its fellows, which not only adjusts each tale or jest to the temper of the person who utters it but fuses all into a poetic unity. It is life in its largeness, its variety, its complexity, which surrounds us in the "Canterbury Tales." In some of the stories indeed, which were composed no doubt at an earlier time, there is the tedium of the old romance or the pedantry of the schoolman; but taken as a whole the poem is the work not of a man of letters but of a man of action. Chaucer has received his training from war, courts, business, travel —a training not of books but of life. And it is life that he loves—the delicacy of its sentiment, the breadth of its farce, its laughter and its tears, the tenderness of its Griseldis or the Smollett-like adventures of the miller and the clerks. It is this largeness of heart, this wide tolerance, which enables him to reflect man for us as none but Shakspere has ever reflected him, and to do this with a pathos, a shrewd sense and kindly humour, a freshness and joyousness of feeling, that even Shakspere has not surpassed.

The French Marriage.

The last ten years of Chaucer's life saw a few more tales added to the Pilgrimage and a few poems to his work; but his power was lessening, and in 1400 he rested from his labours in his last home, a house in the garden of St. Mary's Chapel at Westminster. His body rests within the Abbey church. It was strange that such a voice should have awakened no echo in the singers that follow, but the first burst of English song died as suddenly in Chaucer as the hope and glory of his age. He died indeed at the moment of a revolution which was the prelude to years of national discord and national suffering. Whatever may have been the grounds of his action, the rule of Richard the Second after his assumption of power had shown his capacity for self-restraint. Parted by his own will from the counsellors of his youth, calling to his service the Lords Appellant, reconciled alike with the baronage and the Parliament, the young King promised to be among the noblest and wisest

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rulers that England had seen. But the violent and haughty temper which underlay this self-command showed itself from time to time. The Earl of Arundel and his brother the bishop stood in the front rank of the party which had coerced Richard in his early days; their influence was great in the new government. But a strife between the Earl and John of Gaunt revived the King's resentment at the past action of this house; and at the funeral of Anne of Bohemia in 1394 a fancied slight roused Richard to a burst of passion. He struck the Earl so violently that the blow drew blood. But the quarrel was patched up, and the reconciliation was followed by the elevation of Bishop Arundel to the vacant Primacy in 1396. In the preceding year Richard had crossed to Ireland and in a short autumn campaign reduced its native chiefs again to submission. Fears of Lollard disturbances soon recalled him, but these died at the King's presence, and Richard was able to devote himself to the negotiation of a marriage which was to be the turning point of his reign. His policy throughout the recent years had been a policy of peace. It was war which rendered the Crown helpless before the Parliament, and peace was needful if the work of constant progress was not to be undone. But the short truces, renewed from time to time, which he had as yet secured were insufficient for this purpose, for so long as war might break out in the coming year the King's hands were tied. The impossibility of renouncing the claim to the French crown indeed made a formal peace impossible, but its ends might be secured by a lengthened truce, and it was with a view to this that Richard in 1396 wedded Isabella, the daughter of Charles the Sixth of France. The bride was a mere child, but she brought with her a renewal of the truce for eight and-twenty-years.

Change of Richard's temper.

The match was hardly concluded when the veil under which Richard had shrouded his real temper began to be dropped. His craving for absolute power, such as he witnessed in the Court of France, was probably intensified

from this moment by a mental disturbance which gathered strength as the months went on. As if to preclude any revival of the war Richard had surrendered Cherbourg to the King of Navarre and now gave back Brest to the Duke of Britanny. He was said to have pledged himself at his wedding to restore Calais to the King of France. But once freed from all danger of such a struggle the whole character of his rule seemed to change. His court became as crowded and profuse as his grandfather's. Money was recklessly borrowed and as recklessly squandered. The King's pride became insane, and it was fed with dreams of winning the Imperial crown through the deposition of Wenzel of Bohemia. The councillors with whom he had acted since his resumption of authority saw themselves powerless. John of Gaunt indeed still retained influence over the King. It was the support of the Duke of Lancaster after his return from his Spanish campaign which had enabled Richard to hold in check the Duke of Gloucester and the party that he led; and the anxiety of the young King to retain this support was seen in his grant of Aquitaine to his uncle, and in the legitimation of the Beauforts, John's children by a mistress, Catherine Swinford, whom he married after the death of his second wife. The friendship of the Duke brought with it the adhesion of one even more important, his son Henry, the Earl of Derby. As heir through his mother, Blanche of Lancaster, to the estates and influence of the Lancastrian house, Henry was the natural head of a constitutional opposition, and his weight was increased by a marriage with the heiress of the house of Bohun. He had taken a prominent part in the overthrow of Suffolk and De Vere, and on the King's resumption of power he had prudently withdrawn from the realm on a vow of Crusade, had touched at Barbary, visited the Holy Sepulchre, and in 1390 sailed for Dantzig and taken part in a campaign against the heathen Prussians with the Teutonic Knights. Since his return he had silently followed in his father's

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track. But the counsels of John of Gaunt were hardly wiser than of old; Arundel had already denounced his influence as a hurtful one; and in the events which were now to hurry quickly on he seems to have gone hand in hand with the King.

Richard's tyranny.

A new uneasiness was seen in the Parliament of 1397, and the Commons prayed for a redress of the profusion of the Court. Richard at once seized on the opportunity for a struggle. He declared himself grieved that his subjects should "take on themselves any ordinance or governance of the person of the King or his hostel or of any persons of estate whom he might be pleased to have in his company." The Commons were at once overawed; they owned that the cognizance of such matters belonged wholly to the King, and gave up to the Duke of Lancaster the name of the member, Sir Thomas Haxey, who had brought forward this article of their prayer. The lords pronounced him a traitor, and his life was only saved by the fact that he was a clergyman and by the interposition of Archbishop Arundel. The Earl of Arundel and the Duke of Gloucester at once withdrew from Court. They stood almost alone, for of the royal house the Dukes of Lancaster and York with their sons the Earls of Derby and Rutland were now with the King, and the old coadjutor of Gloucester, the Earl of Nottingham, was in high favour with him. The Earl of Warwick alone joined them, and he was included in a charge of conspiracy which was followed by the arrest of the three. A fresh Parliament in September was packed with royal partizans, and Richard moved boldly to his end. The pardons of the Lords Appellant were revoked. Archbishop Arundel was impeached and banished from the realm, he was transferred by the Pope to the See of St. Andrew's, and the Primacy given to Roger Walden. The Earl of Arundel, accused before the Peers under John of Gaunt as High Steward, was condemned and executed in a single day. Warwick, who owned the truth of the charge, was condemned to perpetual imprisonment. The

Duke of Gloucester was saved from a trial by a sudden death in his prison at Calais. A new Parliament at Shrewsbury in the opening of 1398 completed the King's work. In three days it declared null the proceedings of the Parliament of 1388, granted to the King a subsidy on wool and leather for his life, and delegated its authority to a standing committee of eighteen members from both Houses with power to continue their sittings even after the dissolution of the Parliament and to "examine and determine all matters and subjects which had been moved in the presence of the King with all the dependencies thereof."

Henry of Lancaster.

In a single year the whole colour of Richard's government had changed. He had revenged himself on the men who had once held him down, and his revenge was hardly taken before he disclosed a plan of absolute government. He had used the Parliament to strike down the Primate as well as the greatest nobles of the realm and to give him a revenue for life which enabled him to get rid of Parliament itself, for the Permanent Committee which it named were men devoted, as Richard held, to his cause. John of Gaunt was at its head, and the rest of its lords were those who had backed the King in his blow at Gloucester and the Arundels. Two however were excluded. In the general distribution of rewards which followed Gloucester's overthrow the Earl of Derby had been made Duke of Hereford, the Earl of Nottingham Duke of Norfolk. But at the close of 1397 the two Dukes charged each other with treasonable talk as they rode between Brentford and London, and the Permanent Committee ordered the matter to be settled by a single combat. In September 1398 the Dukes entered the lists; but Richard forbade the duel, sentenced the Duke of Norfolk to banishment for life, and Henry of Lancaster to exile for six years. As Henry left London the streets were crowded with people weeping for his fate; some followed him even to the coast. But his withdrawal removed the last check on Richard's despotism. He forced from

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every tenant of the Crown an oath to recognize the acts of his Committee as valid, and to oppose any attempts to alter or revoke them. Forced loans, the sale of charters of pardon to Gloucester's adherents, the outlawry of seven counties at once on the plea that they had supported his enemies and must purchase pardon, a reckless interference with the course of justice, roused into new life the old discontent. Even this might have been defied had not Richard set an able and unscrupulous leader at its head. Leave had been given to Henry of Lancaster to receive his father's inheritance on the death of John of Gaunt, in February 1399. But an ordinance of the Continual Committee annulled this permission and Richard seized the Lancastrian estates. Archbishop Arundel at once saw the chance of dealing blow for blow. He hastened to Paris and pressed the Duke to return to England, telling him how all men there looked for it, "especially the Londoners, who loved him a hundred times more than they did the King." For a while Henry remained buried in thought, "leaning on a window overlooking a garden;" but Arundel's pressure at last prevailed, he made his way secretly to Britanny, and with fifteen knights set sail from Vannes.

Ireland and the Pale.

What had really decided him was the opportunity offered by Richard's absence from the realm. From the opening of his reign the King's attention had been constantly drawn to his dependent lordship of Ireland. More than two hundred years had passed away since the troubles which followed the murder of Archbishop Thomas forced Henry the Second to leave his work of conquest unfinished, and the opportunity for a complete reduction of the island which had been lost then had never returned. When Henry quitted Ireland indeed Leinster was wholly in English hands, Connaught bowed to a nominal acknowledgement of the English overlordship, and for a while the work of conquest seemed to go steadily on. John de Courcy penetrated into

Ulster and established himself at Down-Patrick; and Henry planned the establishment of his youngest son, John, as Lord of Ireland. But the levity of the young prince, who mocked the rude dresses of the native chieftains and plucked them in insult by the beard, soon forced his father to recall him; and in the continental struggle which soon opened on the Angevin kings as in the constitutional struggle within England itself which followed it all serious purpose of completing the conquest of Ireland was forgotten. Nothing indeed but the feuds and weakness of the Irish tribes enabled the adventurers to hold the districts of Drogheda, Dublin, Wexford, Waterford, and Cork, which formed what was thenceforth known as "the English Pale." In all the history of Ireland no event has proved more disastrous than this half-finished conquest. Had the Irish driven their invaders into the sea, or the English succeeded in the complete reduction of the island, the misery of its after ages might have been avoided. A struggle such as that in which Scotland drove out its conquerors might have produced a spirit of patriotism and national union which would have formed a people out of the mass of warring clans. A conquest such as that in which the Normans made England their own would have spread at any rate the law, the order, the civilization of the conquering country over the length and breadth of the conquered. Unhappily Ireland, while powerless to effect its entire deliverance, was strong enough to hold its assailants partially at bay. The country was broken into two halves whose conflict has never ceased. So far from either giving elements of civilization or good government to the other, conqueror and conquered reaped only degradation from the ceaseless conflict. The native tribes lost whatever tendency to union or social progress had survived the invasion of the Danes. Their barbarism was intensified by their hatred of the more civilized intruders. But these intruders themselves, penned within the narrow

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limits of the Pale, brutalized by a merciless conflict, cut off from contact with the refining influences of a larger world, sank rapidly to the level of the barbarism about them: and the lawlessness, the ferocity, the narrowness of feudalism broke out unchecked in this horde of adventurers who held the land by their sword.

English and Irish.

From the first the story of the English Pale was a story of degradation and anarchy. It needed the stern vengeance of John, whose army stormed its strongholds and drove its leading barons into exile, to preserve even their fealty to the English Crown. John divided the Pale into counties and ordered the observance of the English law; but the departure of his army was the signal for a return of the disorder he had trampled under foot. Between Englishmen and Irishmen went on a ceaseless and pitiless war. Every Irishman without the Pale was counted by the English settlers an enemy and a robber whose murder found no cognizance or punishment at the hands of the law. Half the subsistence of the English barons was drawn from forays across the border, and these forays were avenged by incursions of native marauders which carried havoc at times to the very walls of Dublin. Within the Pale itself the misery was hardly less. The English settlers were harried and oppressed by their own baronage as much as by the Irish marauders, while the feuds of the English lords wasted their strength and prevented any effective combination either for common conquest or common defence. So utter seemed their weakness that Robert Bruce saw in it an opportunity for a counter-blow at his English assailants, and his victory at Bannockburn was followed up by the despatch of a Scotch force to Ireland with his brother Edward at its head. A general rising of the Irish welcomed this deliverer; but the danger drove the barons of the Pale to a momentary union, and in 1316 their valour was proved on the bloody field of Athenree by the slaughter of eleven thousand of their foes and the almost complete annihilation of the sept of the

O'Connors. But with victory returned the old anarchy and degradation. The barons of the Pale sank more and more into Irish chieftains. The Fitz-Maurices, who became Earls of Desmond and whose vast territory in Munster was erected into a County Palatine, adopted the dress and manners of the natives around them. The rapid growth of this evil was seen in the ruthless provisions by which Edward the Third strove to check it in his Statute of Kilkenny. The Statute forbade the adoption of the Irish language or name or dress by any man of English blood: it enforced within the Pale the exclusive use of English law, and made the use of the native or Brehon law, which was gaining ground, an act of treason; it made treasonable any marriage of the Englishry with persons of Irish race, or any adoption of English children by Irish foster-fathers.

Richard in Ireland.

But stern as they were these provisions proved fruitless to check the fusion of the two races, while the growing independence of the Lords of the Pale threw off all but the semblance of obedience to the English government. It was this which stirred Richard to a serious effort for the conquest and organization of the island. In 1386 he granted the "entire dominion" of Ireland with the title of its Duke to Robert de Vere on condition of his carrying out its utter reduction. But the troubles of the reign soon recalled De Vere, and it was not till the truce with France had freed his hands that the King again took up his projects of conquest. In 1394 he landed with an army at Waterford, and received the general submission of the native chieftains. But the Lords of the Pale held sullenly aloof; and Richard had no sooner quitted the island than the Irish in turn refused to carry out their promise of quitting Leinster, and engaged in a fresh contest with the Earl of March, whom the King had proclaimed as his heir and left behind him as his lieutenant in Ireland. In the summer of 1398 March was beaten and slain in battle: and Richard resolved to

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avenge his cousin's death and complete the work he had begun by a fresh invasion. He felt no apprehension of danger. At home his triumph seemed complete. The death of Norfolk, the exile of Henry of Lancaster, left the baronage without heads for any rising. He ensured, as he believed, the loyalty of the great houses by the hostages of their blood whom he carried with him, at whose head was Henry of Lancaster's son, the future Henry the Fifth. The refusal of the Percies, the Earl of Northumberland and his son Henry Percy or Hotspur, to obey his summons might have warned him that danger was brewing in the north. Richard however took little heed. He banished the Percies, who withdrew into Scotland; and sailed for Ireland at the end of May, leaving his uncle the Duke of York regent in his stead.

Landing of Henry.

The opening of his campaign was indecisive, and it was not till fresh reinforcements arrived at Dublin that the King could prepare for a march into the heart of the island. But while he planned the conquest of Ireland the news came that England was lost. Little more than a month had passed after his departure when Henry of Lancaster entered the Humber and landed at Ravenspur. He came, he said, to claim his heritage; and three of his Yorkshire castles at once threw open their gates. The two great houses of the north joined him at once. Ralph Neville, the Earl of Westmoreland, had married his half-sister; the Percies came from their exile over the Scottish border. As he pushed quickly to the south all resistance broke down. The army which the Regent gathered refused to do hurt to the Duke; London called him to her gates; and the royal Council could only march hastily on Bristol in the hope of securing that port for the King's return. But the town at once yielded to Henry's summons, the Regent submitted to him, and with an army which grew at every step the Duke marched upon Cheshire, where Richard's adherents were gathering in arms to meet the King. Contrary winds had for a while kept Richard ignorant

of his cousin's progress, and even when the news reached him he was in a web of treachery. The Duke of Albemarle, the son of the Regent Duke of York, was beside him, and at his persuasion the King abandoned his first purpose of returning at once, and sent the Earl of Salisbury to Conway while he himself waited to gather his army and fleet. The six days he proposed to gather them in became sixteen, and the delay proved fatal to his cause. As no news came of Richard the Welshmen who flocked to Salisbury's camp dispersed on Henry's advance to Chester. Henry was in fact master of the realm at the opening of August when Richard at last sailed from Waterford and landed at Milford Haven.

Richard's capture.

Every road was blocked, and the news that all was lost told on the thirty thousand men he brought with him. In a single day but six thousand remained, and even these dispersed when it was found that the King had ridden off disguised as a friar to join the force which he believed to be awaiting him in North Wales with Salisbury at its head. He reached Caernarvon only to find this force already disbanded, and throwing himself into the castle despatched his kinsmen, the Dukes of Exeter and Surrey, to Chester to negotiate with Henry of Lancaster. But they were detained there while the Earl of Northumberland pushed forward with a picked body of men, and securing the castles of the coast at last sought an interview with Richard at Conway. The King's confidence was still unbroken. He threatened to raise a force of Welshmen and to put Lancaster to death. Deserted as he was indeed, a King was in himself a power, and only the treacherous pledges of the Earl induced him to set aside his plans for a reconciliation to be brought about in Parliament and to move from Conway on the promise of a conference with Henry at Flint. But he had no sooner reached the town than he found himself surrounded by Lancaster's forces. "I am betrayed," he cried, as the view of his enemies burst on him from the hill;

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"there are pennons and banners in the valley." But it was too late for retreat. Richard was seized and brought before his cousin. "I am come before my time," said Lancaster, "but I will show you the reason. Your people, my lord, complain that for the space of twenty years you have ruled them harshly: however, if it please God, I will help you to rule them better." "Fair cousin," replied the King, "since it pleases you, it pleases me well." Then, breaking in private into passionate regrets that he had ever spared his cousin's life, he suffered himself to be carried a prisoner along the road to London.

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CHAPTER V.

THE HOUSE OF LANCASTER.

1399—1422

ONCE safe in the Tower, it was easy to wrest from Richard a resignation of his crown; and this resignation was solemnly accepted by the Parliament which met at the close of September 1399. But the resignation was confirmed by a solemn Act of Deposition. The coronation oath was read, and a long impeachment which stated the breach of the promises made in it was followed by a solemn vote of both Houses which removed Richard from the state and authority of King. According to the strict rules of hereditary descent as construed by the feudal lawyers by an assumed analogy with the rules which governed descent of ordinary estates the crown would now have passed to a house which had at an earlier period played a leading part in the revolutions of the Edwards. The great-grandson of the Mortimer who brought about the deposition of Edward the Second had married the daughter and heiress of Lionel of Clarence, the third son of Edward the Third. The childlessness of Richard and the death of Edward's second son without issue placed Edmund Mortimer, the son of the Earl who had fallen in Ireland, first among the claimants of the crown; but he was now a child of six years old, the strict rule of hereditary descent had never received any formal recognition in the case of the Crown, and precedent suggested a right of Parliament to choose in such a case a successor among any other members of

Henry the Fourth.

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the Royal House. Only one such successor was in fact possible. Rising from his seat and crossing himself, Henry of Lancaster solemnly challenged the crown, "as that I am descended by right line of blood coming from the good lord King Henry the Third, and through that right that God of his grace hath sent me with help of my kin and of my friends to recover it: the which realm was in point to be undone by default of governance and undoing of good laws." Whatever defects such a claim might present were more than covered by the solemn recognition of Parliament. The two Archbishops, taking the new sovereign by the hand, seated him upon the throne, and Henry in emphatic words ratified the compact between himself and his people. "Sirs," he said to the prelates, lords, knights, and burgesses gathered round him, "I thank God and you, spiritual and temporal, and all estates of the land; and do you to wit it is not my will that any man think that by way of conquest I would disinherit any of his heritage, franchises, or other rights that he ought to have, nor put him out of the good that he has and has had by the good laws and customs of the realm, except those persons that have been against the good purpose and the common profit of the realm."

Statute of Heresy.

The deposition of a king, the setting aside of one claimant and the elevation of another to the throne, marked the triumph of the English Parliament over the monarchy. The struggle of the Edwards against its gradual advance had culminated in the bold effort of Richard the Second to supersede it by a commission dependent on the Crown. But the House of Lancaster was precluded by its very position from any renewal of the struggle. It was not merely that the exhaustion of the treasury by the war and revolt which followed Henry's accession left him even more than the kings who had gone before in the hands of the Estates; it was that his very right to the Crown lay in an acknow-

ledgement of their highest pretensions. He had been raised to the throne by a Parliamentary revolution. His claim to obedience had throughout to rest on a Parliamentary title. During no period of our early history therefore were the powers of the two Houses so frankly recognized. The tone of Henry the Fourth till the very close of his reign is that of humble compliance in all but ecclesiastical matters with the prayers of the Parliament, and even his imperious successor shrank almost with timidity from any conflict with it. But the Crown had been bought by pledges less noble than this. Arundel was not only the representative of constitutional rule; he was also the representative of religious persecution. No prelate had been so bitter a foe of the Lollards, and the support which the Church had given to the recent revolution had no doubt sprung from its belief that a sovereign whom Arundel placed on the throne would deal pitilessly with the growing heresy. The expectations of the clergy were soon realized. In the first Convocation of his reign Henry declared himself the protector of the Church and ordered the prelates to take measures for the suppression of heresy and of the wandering preachers. His declaration was but a prelude to the Statute of Heresy which was passed at the opening of 1401. By the provisions of this infamous Act the hindrances which had till now neutralized the efforts of the bishops to enforce the common law were utterly taken away. Not only were they permitted to arrest all preachers of heresy, all schoolmasters infected with heretical teaching, all owners and writers of heretical books, and to imprison them even if they recanted at the King's pleasure, but a refusal to abjure or a relapse after abjuration enabled them to hand over the heretic to the civil officers, and by these —so ran the first legal enactment of religious bloodshed which defiled our Statute-book—he was to be burned on a high place before the people. The statute was hardly passed when William Sautre became its first victim.

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Sautre, while a parish priest at Lynn, had been cited before the Bishop of Norwich two years before for heresy and forced to recant. But he still continued to preach against the worship of images, against pilgrimages, and against transubstantiation till the Statute of Heresy strengthened Arundel's hands. In February, 1401, Sautre was brought before the Primate as a relapsed heretic, and on refusing to recant a second time was degraded from his orders. He was handed to the secular power, and on the issue of a royal writ publicly burned.

England and France.

The support of the nobles had been partly won by a hope hardly less fatal to the peace of the realm, the hope of a renewal of the strife with France. The peace of Richard's later years had sprung not merely from the policy of the English King, but from the madness of Charles the Sixth of France. France fell into the hands of its king's uncle, the Duke of Burgundy, and as the Duke was ruler of Flanders and peace with England was a necessity for Flemish industry, his policy went hand in hand with that of Richard. His rival, the King's brother, Lewis, Duke of Orleans, was the head of the French war-party; and it was with the view of bringing about war that he supported Henry of Lancaster in his exile at the French court. Burgundy on the other hand listened to Richard's denunciation of Henry as a traitor, and strove to prevent his departure. But his efforts were in vain, and he had to witness a revolution which hurled Richard from the throne, deprived Isabella of her crown, and restored to power the baronial party of which Gloucester, the advocate of war, had long been the head. The dread of war was increased by a pledge which Henry was said to have given at his coronation that he would not only head an army in its march into France but that he would march further into France than ever his grandfather had done. The French Court retorted by refusing to acknowledge Henry as King, while the truce concluded with Richard came at his death legally to an end. In spite of this defiance however

Burgundy remained true to the interests of Flanders, and Henry clung to a truce which gave him time to establish his throne. But the influence of the baronial party in England made peace hard to keep; the Duke of Orleans urged on France to war; and the hatred of the two peoples broke through the policy of the two governments. Count Waleran of St. Pol, who had married Richard's half-sister, put out to sea with a fleet which swept the east coast and entered the Channel. Pirates from Britanny and Navarre soon swarmed in the narrow seas, and their ravages were paid back by those of pirates from the Cinque Ports. A more formidable trouble broke out in the north. The enmity of France roused as of old the enmity of Scotland; the Scotch King Robert the Third refused to acknowledge Henry, and Scotch freebooters cruized along the northern coast.

Richard's death.

Attack from without woke attack from within the realm. Henry had shown little taste for bloodshed in his conduct of the revolution. Save those of the royal councillors whom he found at Bristol no one had been put to death. Though a deputation of lords with Archbishop Arundel at its head pressed him to take Richard's life, he steadily refused, and kept him a prisoner at Pomfret. The judgements against Gloucester, Warwick, and Arundel were reversed, but the lords who had appealed the Duke were only punished by the loss of the dignities which they had received as their reward. Richard's brother and nephew by the half-blood, the Dukes of Surrey and Exeter, became again Earls of Kent and Huntingdon. York's son, the Duke of Albemarle, sank once more into Earl of Rutland. Beaufort, Earl of Somerset, lost his new Marquisate of Dorset; Spenser lost his Earldom of Gloucester. But in spite of a stormy scene among the lords in Parliament Henry refused to exact further punishment; and his real temper was seen in a statute which forbade all such appeals and left treason to be dealt with by ordinary process of law. But the times were too rough

for mercy such as this. Clouds no sooner gathered round the new King than the degraded lords leagued with the Earl of Salisbury and the deposed Bishop of Carlisle to release Richard and to murder Henry. Betrayed by Rutland in the spring of 1401, and threatened by the King's march from London, they fled to Cirencester; but the town was against them, its burghers killed Kent and Salisbury, and drove out the rest. A terrible retribution followed. Lord Spenser and the Earl of Huntingdon were taken and summarily beheaded; thirty more conspirators fell into the King's hands to meet the same fate. They drew with them in their doom the wretched prisoner in whose name they had risen. A great council held after the suppression of the revolt prayed "that if Richard, the late King, be alive, as some suppose he is, it be ordained that he be well and securely guarded for the safety of the states of the King and kingdom; but if he be dead, then that he be openly showed to the people that they may have knowledge thereof." The ominous words were soon followed by news of Richard's death in prison. His body was brought to St. Paul's, Henry himself with the princes of the blood royal bearing the pall: and the face was left uncovered to meet rumours that the prisoner had been assassinated by his keeper, Sir Piers Exton.

Revolt of Wales.

In June Henry marched northward to end the trouble from the Scots. With their usual policy the Scottish army under the Duke of Albany withdrew as the English crossed the border, and looked coolly on while Henry invested the castle of Edinburgh. The wants of his army forced him in fact to raise the siege; but even success would have been fruitless, for he was recalled by trouble nearer home. Wales was in full revolt. The country had been devoted to Richard; and so notorious was its disaffection to the new line that when Henry's son knelt at his father's feet to receive a grant of the Principality a shrewd bystander murmured, "he must conquer it if he will have it." The death of the fallen King only added to the Welsh disquiet,

for in spite of the public exhibition of his body he was believed to be still alive. Some held that he had escaped to Scotland, and an impostor who took his name was long maintained at the Scottish Court. In Wales it was believed that he was still a prisoner in Chester Castle. But the trouble would have died away had it not been raised into revolt by the energy of Owen Glyndwr or Glendower. Owen was a descendant of one of the last native Princes, Llewelyn-ap-Jorwerth, and the lord of considerable estates in Merioneth. He had been squire of the body to Richard the Second, and had clung to him till he was seized at Flint. It was probably his known aversion from the revolution which had deposed his master that brought on him the hostility of Lord Grey of Ruthin, the stay of the Lancastrian cause in North Wales; and the same political ground may have existed for the refusal of the Parliament to listen to his prayer for redress and for the restoration of the lands which Grey had seized. But the refusal was embittered by words of insult; when the Bishop of St. Asaph warned them of Owen's power the lords retorted that "they cared not for barefoot knaves." They were soon to be made to care. At the close of 1400 Owen rose in revolt, burned the town of Ruthin, and took the title of Prince of Wales.

Owen Glyndwr.

His action at once changed the disaffection into a national revolt. His raids on the Marches and his capture of Radnor marked its importance, and Henry marched against him in the summer of 1401. But Glyndwr's post at Corwen defied attack, and the pressure in the north forced the King to march away into Scotland. Henry Percy, who held the castles of North Wales as Constable, was left to suppress the rebellion, but Owen met Percy's arrival by the capture of Conway and the King was forced to hurry fresh forces under his son Henry to the west. The boy was too young as yet to show the military and political ability which was to find its first field in these Welsh campaigns, and his presence did little to stay the

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growth of revolt. While Owen's lands were being harried Owen was stirring the people of Caermarthen into rebellion and pressing the siege of Abergavenny; nor could the presence of English troops save Shropshire from pillage. Everywhere the Welshmen rose for their "Prince;" the Bards declared his victories to have been foretold by Merlin; even the Welsh scholars at Oxford left the University in a body and joined his standard. The castles of Ruthin, Hawarden, and Flint fell into his hands, and with his capture of Conway gave him command of North Wales. The arrival of help from Scotland and the hope of help from France gave fresh vigour to Owen's action, and though Percy held his ground stubbornly on the coast and even recovered Conway he at last threw up his command in disgust. A fresh inroad of Henry on his return from Scotland again failed to bring Owen to battle, and the negotiations which he carried on during the following winter were a mere blind to cover preparations for a new attack. So strong had Glyndwr become in 1402 that in June he was able to face an English army in the open field at Brynglas and to defeat it with a loss of a thousand men. The King again marched to the border to revenge this blow. But the storms which met him as he entered the hills, storms which his archers ascribed to the magic powers of Owen, ruined his army, and he was forced to withdraw as of old. A raid over the northern border distracted the English forces. A Scottish army entered England with the impostor who bore Richard's name, and though it was utterly defeated by Henry Percy in September at Homildon Hill the respite had served Owen well. He sallied out from the inaccessible fastnesses in which he had held Henry at bay to win victories which were followed by the adhesion of all North Wales and of great part of South Wales to his cause.

The Percies.

What gave life to these attacks and conspiracies was the hostility of France. The influence of the Duke of

Burgundy was still strong enough to prevent any formal hostilities, but the war party was gaining more and more the ascendant. Its head, the Duke of Orleans, had fanned the growing flame by sending a formal defiance to Henry the Fourth as the murderer of Richard. French knights were among the prisoners whom the Percies took at Homildon Hill; and it may have been through their intervention that the Percies themselves were now brought into correspondence with the court of France. No house had played a greater part in the overthrow of Richard, or had been more richly rewarded by the new King. But old grudges existed between the house of Percy and the house of Lancaster. The Earl of Northumberland had been at bitter variance with John of Gaunt; and though a common dread of Richard's enmity had thrown the Percies and Henry together the new King and his powerful subjects were soon parted again. Henry had ground indeed for distrust. The death of Richard left the young Mortimer, Earl of March, next claimant in blood of the crown, and the King had shown his sense of this danger by imprisoning the earl and his sisters in the Tower. But this imprisonment made their uncle, Sir Edmund Mortimer, the representative of their house; and Edmund withdrew to the Welsh Marches, refusing to own Henry for king. The danger was averted by the luck which threw Sir Edmund as a captive into the hands of Owen Glyndwr in the battle of Brynglas. It was natural that Henry should refuse to allow Mortimer's kinsmen to ransom so formidable an enemy; but among these kinsmen Henry Percy ranked himself through his marriage with Sir Edmund's sister, and the refusal served as a pretext for a final breach with the King.

Overthrow of the Percies.

Percy had withdrawn from the Welsh war in wrath at the inadequate support which Henry gave him; and his anger had been increased by a delay in repayment of the sums spent by his house in the contest with Scotland, as well as by the King's demand that he should surrender the Earl

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of Douglas whom he had taken prisoner at Homildon Hill. He now became the centre of a great conspiracy to place the Earl of March upon the throne. His father, the Earl of Northumberland, his uncle, Thomas Percy, the Earl of Worcester, joined in the plot. Sir Edmund Mortimer negotiated for aid from Owen Glyndwr; the Earl of Douglas threw in his fortunes with the confederates; and Henry Percy himself crossed to France and obtained promises of support. The war party had now gained the upper hand at the French court; in 1403 preparations were made to attack Calais, and a Breton fleet put to sea. At the news of its presence in the Channel Henry Percy and the Earl of Worcester at once rose in the north and struck across England to join Owen Glyndwr in Wales, while the Earl of Northumberland gathered a second army and advanced more slowly to their support. But Glyndwr was still busy with the siege of Caermarthen, and the King by a hasty march flung himself across the road of the Percies as they reached Shrewsbury. On the twenty-third of July a fierce fight ended in the defeat of the rebel force. Henry Percy was slain in battle, the Earl of Worcester taken and beheaded; while Northumberland, who had been delayed by an army under his rival in the north, Neville, Earl of Westmoreland, was thrown into prison, and only pardoned on his protestations of innocence. The quick, hard blow did its work. The young Earl of March betrayed the plans of his partizans to purchase pardon. The Breton fleet, which had defeated an English fleet in the Channel and made a descent upon Plymouth, withdrew to its harbours; and though the Duke of Burgundy was on the point of commencing the siege of Calais the plans of an attack on that town were no more heard of.

Henry's difficulties.

But the difficulty of Wales remained as great as ever. The discouragement of Owen at the failure of the conspiracy of the Percies was removed by the open aid of the French Court. In July 1404 the French King in a

formal treaty owned Glyndwr as Prince of Wales, and his promises of aid gave fresh heart to the insurgents. What hampered Henry's efforts most in meeting this danger was the want of money. At the opening of 1404 the Parliament grudgingly gave a subsidy of a twentieth, but the treasury called for fresh supplies in October, and the wearied Commons fell back on their old proposal of a confiscation of Church property. Under the influence of Archbishop Arundel the Lords succeeded in quashing the project, and a new subsidy was voted; but the treasury was soon as empty as before. Treason was still rife; the Duke of York, who had played so conspicuous a part in Richard's day as Earl of Rutland, was sent for a while to the Tower on suspicion of complicity in an attempt of his sister to release the Earl of March; and Glyndwr remained unconquerable.

Turn of the tide.

But fortune was now beginning to turn. The danger from Scotland was suddenly removed. King Robert resolved to send his son James for training to the court of France, but the boy was driven to the English coast by a storm and Henry refused to release him. Had the Scots been friends, the King jested, they would have sent James to him for education, as he knew the French tongue quite as well as King Charles. Robert died of grief at the news; and Scotland fell into the hands of his brother, the Duke of Albany, whose one aim was that his nephew should remain a prisoner. James grew up at the English Court; and prisoner though he was, the excellence of his training was seen in the poetry and intelligence of his later life. But with its King as a hostage Scotland was no longer to be dreaded as a foe. France too was weakened at this moment; for in 1405 the long smouldering jealousy between the Dukes of Orleans and of Burgundy broke out at last into open strife. The break did little indeed to check the desultory hostilities which were going on. A Breton fleet made descents on Portland and Dartmouth. The Count of Armagnac, the strongest supporter of Orleans

and the war party, led troops against the frontier of Guienne. But the weakness of France and the exhaustion of its treasury prevented any formal denunciation of the truce or declaration of war. Though Henry could spare not a soldier for Guienne Armagnac did little hurt. An English fleet repaid the ravages of the Bretons by harrying the coast of Britanny; and the turn of French politics soon gave Frenchmen too much work at home to spare men for work abroad. At the close of 1407 the murder of the Duke of Orleans by the order of the Duke of Burgundy changed the weak and fitful strife which had been going on into a struggle of the bitterest hate. The Count of Armagnac placed himself at the head of the murdered duke's partizans; and in their furious antagonism Armagnac and Burgundian alike sought aid from the English King.

Prince Henry.

But the fortune which favoured Henry elsewhere was still slow to turn in the West. In the opening of 1405 the King's son, Henry Prince of Wales, had taken the field against Glyndwr. Young as he was, Henry was already a tried soldier. As a boy of thirteen he had headed an incursion into Scotland in the year of his father's accession to the throne. At fifteen he fought in the front of the royal army in the desperate fight at Shrewsbury. Slight and tall in stature as he seemed, he had outgrown the weakness of his earlier years and was vigorous and swift of foot; his manners were courteous, his air grave and reserved; and though wild tales ran of revels and riots among his friends, the poets whom he favoured and Lydgate whom he set to translate "the drery piteous tale of him of Troy" saw in him a youth "both manful and vertuous." There was little time indeed for mere riot in a life so busy as Henry's, nor were many opportunities for self-indulgence to be found in campaigns against Glyndwr. What fitted the young general of seventeen for the thankless work in Wales was his stern, immoveable will. But fortune as yet had few smiles for the

King in this quarter, and his constant ill-success continued to wake fresh troubles within England itself. The repulse of the young prince in a spring campaign in 1405 was at once followed by a revolt in the north. The pardon of Northumberland had left him still a foe; the Earl of Nottingham was son of Henry's opponent, the banished Duke of Norfolk; Scrope, Archbishop of York, was brother of Richard's counsellor, the Earl of Wiltshire, who had been beheaded on the surrender of Bristol. Their rising in May might have proved a serious danger had not the treachery of Ralph Neville, the Earl of Westmoreland, who still remained steady to the Lancastrian cause, secured the arrest of some of its leaders. Scrope and Lord Nottingham were beheaded, while Northumberland and his partizan Lord Bardolf fled into Scotland and from thence to Wales. Succours from France stirred the King to a renewed attack on Glyndwr in November; but with the same ill-success. Storms and want of food wrecked the English army and forced it to retreat; a year of rest raised Glyndwr to new strength; and when the long promised body of eight thousand Frenchmen joined him in 1407 he ventured even to cross the border and to threaten Worcester. The threat was a vain one and the Welsh army soon withdrew; but the insult gave fresh heart to Henry's foes, and in 1408 Northumberland and Bardolf again appeared in the north. Their overthrow at Bramham Moor put an end to the danger from the Percies; for Northumberland and Bardolf alike fell on the field. But Wales remained as defiant as ever. In 1409 a body of Welshmen poured ravaging into Shropshire; many of the English towns had fallen into Glyndwr's hands; and some of the marcher-lords made private truces with him.

Oldcastle.

The weakness which was produced by this ill-success in the West as well as these constant battlings with disaffection within the realm was seen in the attitude of the Lollards. Lollardry was far from having been crushed by the Statute of Heresy. The death of the Earl of Salisbury

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in the first of the revolts against Henry's throne, though his gory head was welcomed into London by a procession of abbots and bishops who went out singing psalms of thanksgiving to meet it, only transferred the leadership of the party to one of the foremost warriors of the time, Sir John Oldcastle. If we believe his opponents, and we have no information about him save from hostile sources, he was of lowly origin, and his rise must have been due to his own capacity and services to the Crown. In his youth he had listened to the preaching of Wyclif, and his Lollardry—if we may judge from its tone in later years—was a violent fanaticism. But this formed no obstacle to his rise in Richard's reign; his marriage with the heiress of that house made him Lord Cobham; and the accession of Henry of Lancaster, to whose cause he seems to have clung in these younger days, brought him fairly to the front. His skill in arms found recognition in his appointment as sheriff of Herefordshire and as castellan of Brecknock; and he was among the leaders who were chosen in later years for service in France. His warlike renown endeared him to the King, and Prince Henry counted him among the most illustrious of his servants. The favour of the royal house was the more noteable that Oldcastle was known as "leader and captain" of the Lollards. His Kentish castle of Cowling served as the headquarters of the sect, and their preachers were openly entertained at his houses in London or on the Welsh border. The Convocation of 1413 charged him with being "the principal receiver, favourer, protector, and defender of them; and that, especially in the dioceses of London, Rochester, and Hereford, he hath sent out the said Lollards to preach . . . . and hath been present at their wicked sermons, grievously punishing with threatenings, terror, and the power of the secular sword such as did withstand them, alleging and affirming among other matters that we, the bishops, had no power to make any such Constitutions" as the Provincial Constitutions in which they had for-

bidden the preaching of unlicensed preachers. The bold stand of Lord Cobham drew fresh influence from the sanctity of his life. Though the clergy charged him with the foulest heresy, they owned that he shrouded it "under a veil of holiness." What chiefly moved their wrath was that he "armed the hands of laymen for the spoil of the Church." The phrase seems to hint that Oldcastle was the mover in the repeated attempts of the Commons to supply the needs of the state by a confiscation of Church property. In 1404 they prayed that the needs of the kingdom might be defrayed by a confiscation of Church lands, and though this prayer was fiercely met by Archbishop Arundel it was renewed in 1410. The Commons declared as before that by devoting the revenues of the prelates to the service of the state maintenance could be made for fifteen earls, fifteen hundred knights, and six thousand squires, while a hundred hospitals might be established for the sick and infirm. Such proposals had been commonly made by the baronial party with which the house of Lancaster had in former days been connected, and hostile as they were to the Church as an establishment they had no necessary connexion with any hostility to its doctrines. But a direct sympathy with Lollardism was seen in the further proposals of the Commons. They prayed for the abolition of episcopal jurisdiction over the clergy and for a mitigation of the Statute of Heresy.

Action of Prince Henry.

But formidable as the movement seemed it found a formidable opponent. The steady fighting of Prince Henry had at last met the danger from Wales, and Glyndwr, though still unconquered, saw district after district submit again to English rule. From Wales the Prince returned to bring his will to bear on England itself. It was through his strenuous opposition that the proposals of the Commons in 1410 were rejected by the Lords. He gave at the same moment a more terrible proof of his loyalty to the Church in personally assisting at the burning of a layman, Thomas Badby, for a denial of transubstantiation. The prayers of

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the sufferer were taken for a recantation, and the Prince ordered the fire to be plucked away. But when the offer of life and a pension failed to break the spirit of the Lollard Henry pitilessly bade him be hurled back to his doom. The Prince was now the virtual ruler of the realm. His father's earlier popularity had disappeared amidst the troubles and heavy taxation of his reign. He was already a victim to the attack of epilepsy which brought him to the grave; and in the opening of 1410 the Parliament called for the appointment of a Continual Council. The Council was appointed, and the Prince placed at its head. His energy was soon seen in a more active interposition in the affairs of France. So bitter had the hatred grown between the Burgundian and Armagnac parties that both in turn appealed again to England for help. The Burgundian alliance found favour with the Council. In August, 1411, the Duke of Burgundy offered his daughter in marriage to the Prince as the price of English aid, and four thousand men with Lord Cobham among their leaders were sent to join his forces at Paris. Their help enabled Duke John to bring his opponents to battle at St. Cloud, and to win a decisive victory in November. But already the King was showing himself impatient of the Council's control; and the Parliament significantly prayed that "as there had been a great murmur among your people that you have had in your heart a heavy load against some of your lieges come to this present Parliament," they might be formally declared to be "faithful lieges and servants." The prayer was granted, but in spite of the support which the Houses gave to the Prince, Henry the Fourth was resolute to assert his power. At the close of 1411 he declared his will to stand in as great freedom, prerogative, and franchise as any of his predecessors had done, and annulled on that ground the appointment of the Continual Council.

Death of Henry the Fourth.

The King's blow had been dealt at the instigation of his Queen, and it seems to have been prompted as much by

a resolve to change the outer policy which the Prince had adopted as to free himself from the Council. The dismissal of the English troops by John of Burgundy after his victory at St. Cloud had irritated the English Court; and the Duke of Orleans took advantage of this turn of feeling to offer Catharine, the French King's daughter, in marriage to the Prince, and to promise the restoration of all that England claimed in Guienne and Poitou. In spite of the efforts of the Prince and the Duke of Burgundy a treaty of alliance with Orleans was signed on these terms in May, 1412, and a force under the King's second son, the Duke of Clarence, disembarked at La Hogue. But the very profusion of the Orleanist offers threw doubt on their sincerity. The Duke was only using the English aid to put a pressure on his antagonist, and its landing in August at once brought John of Burgundy to a seeming submission. While Clarence penetrated by Normandy and Maine into the Orleanois and a second English force sailed for Calais, both the French parties joined in pledging their services to King Charles "against his adversary of England." Before this union Clarence was forced in November to accept promise of payment for his men from the Duke of Orleans and to fall back on Bordeaux. The failure no doubt gave fresh strength to Prince Henry. In the opening of 1412 he had been discharged from the Council and Clarence set in his place at its head; he had been defeated in his attempts to renew the Burgundian alliance, and had striven in vain to hinder Clarence from sailing. The break grew into an open quarrel. Letters were sent into various counties refuting the charges of the Prince's detractors, and in September Henry himself appeared before his father with a crowd of his friends and supporters demanding the punishment of those who accused him. The charges made against him were that he sought to bring about the King's removal from the throne; and "the great recourse of people unto him, of which his court was at all times more abundant than his father's," gave colour to the

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accusation. Henry the Fourth owned his belief in these charges, but promised to call a Parliament for his son's vindication; and the Parliament met in the February of 1413. But a new attack of epilepsy had weakened the King's strength; and though galleys were gathered for a Crusade which he had vowed he was too weak to meet the Houses on their assembly. If we may trust a charge which was afterwards denied, the King's half-brother, Bishop Henry of Winchester, one of the Beaufort children of John of Gaunt, acting in secret co-operation with the Prince, now brought the peers to pray Henry to suffer his son to be crowned in his stead. The King's refusal was the last act of a dying man. Before the end of March he breathed his last in the "Jerusalem Chamber" within the Abbot's house at Westminster; and the Prince obtained the crown which he had sought.

Suppression of the Lollards.

The removal of Archbishop Arundel from the Chancellorship, which was given to Henry Beaufort of Winchester, was among the first acts of Henry the Fifth; and it is probable that this blow at the great foe of the Lollards gave encouragement to the hopes of Oldcastle. He seized the opportunity of the coronation in April to press his opinions on the young King, though probably rather with a view to the plunder of the Church than to any directly religious end. From the words of the clerical chroniclers it is plain that Henry had no mind as yet for any open strife with either party, and that he quietly put the matter aside. He was in fact busy with foreign affairs. The Duke of Clarence was recalled from Bordeaux, and a new truce concluded with France. The policy of Henry was clearly to look on for awhile at the shifting politics of the distracted kingdom. Soon after his accession another revolution in Paris gave the charge of the mad King Charles, and with it the nominal government of the realm, to the Duke of Orleans; and his cause derived fresh strength from the support of the young Dauphin, who was afterwards to play so great a part in the history of France as Charles the Seventh. John

of Burgundy withdrew to Flanders, and both parties again sought Henry's aid. But his hands were tied as yet by trouble at home. Oldcastle was far from having abandoned his projects, discouraged as they had been by his master; while the suspicions of Henry's favour to the Lollard cause which could hardly fail to be roused by his favour to the Lollard leader only spurred the bold spirit of Arundel to energetic action. A council of bishops gathered in the summer to denounce Lollardry and at once called on Henry to suffer Oldcastle to be brought to justice. The King pleaded for delay in the case of one who was so close a friend, and strove personally to convince Lord Cobham of his errors. All however was in vain, and Oldcastle withdrew to his castle of Cowling, while Arundel summoned him before his court and convicted him as a heretic. His open defiance at last forced the King to act. In September a body of royal troops arrested Lord Cobham and carried him to the Tower; but his life was still spared, and after a month's confinement his imprisonment was relaxed on his promise of recantation. Cobham however had now resolved on open resistance. He broke from the Tower in November, and from his hiding-place organized a vast revolt. At the opening of 1414 a secret order summoned the Lollards to assemble in St. Giles's Fields outside London. We gather, if not the real aims of the rising, at least the terror it caused, from Henry's statement that its purpose was "to destroy himself, his brothers, and several of the spiritual and temporal lords;" from Cobham's later declarations it is probable that the pretext of the rising was to release Richard, whom he asserted to be still alive, and to set him again on the throne. But the vigilance of the young King prevented the junction of the Lollards within the city with their confederates without, and these as they appeared at the place of meeting were dispersed by the royal troops.

The failure of the rising only increased the rigour of the law. Magistrates were directed to arrest all heretics and hand them over to the bishops; a conviction of heresy was

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made to entail forfeiture of blood and estate; and the execution of thirty-nine prominent Lollards as traitors gave terrible earnest of the King's resolve to suppress their sect. Oldcastle escaped, and for four years longer strove to rouse revolt after revolt. He was at last captured on the Welsh border and burned as a heretic; but from the moment when his attempt at revolt was crushed in St. Giles's Fields the dread of Lollardry was broken and Henry was free to take a more energetic course of policy on the other side the sea. He had already been silently preparing for action by conciliatory measures, by restoring Henry Percy's son to the Earldom of Northumberland, by the release of the Earl of March, and by the solemn burial of Richard the Second at Westminster. The suppression of the Lollard revolt was followed by a demand for the restoration of the English possessions in France, and by alliances and preparations for war. Burgundy stood aloof in a sullen neutrality, and the Duke of Orleans, who was now virtually ruler of the French kingdom, in vain proposed concession after concession. All negotiation indeed broke down when Henry formally put forward his claim on the crown of France. No claim could have been more utterly baseless, for the Parliamentary title by which the House of Lancaster held England could give it no right over France, and the strict law of hereditary succession which Edward asserted could be pleaded, if pleaded at all, only by the House of Mortimer. Not only the claim indeed, but the very nature of the war itself was wholly different from that of Edward the Third. Edward had been forced into the struggle against his will by the ceaseless attacks of France, and his claim of the crown was little but an afterthought to secure the alliance of Flanders. The war of Henry on the other hand, though in form a mere renewal of the earlier struggle on the close of the truce made by Richard the Second, was in fact an aggression on the part of a nation tempted by the helplessness of its opponent and galled by the memory of former defeat.

Renewal of the French War

Its one excuse lay in the attacks which France for the past fifteen years had directed against the Lancastrian throne, its encouragement of every enemy without and of every traitor within. Henry may fairly have regarded such a ceaseless hostility, continued even through years of weakness, as forcing him in sheer self-defence to secure his realm against the weightier attack which might be looked for, should France recover her strength.

Agincourt.

In the summer of 1415 the King prepared to sail from Southampton, when a plot reminded him of the insecurity of his throne. The Earl of March was faithful: but he was childless, and his claim would pass at his death through a sister who had wedded the Earl of Cambridge, a son of the Duke of York, to her child Richard, the Duke who was to play so great a part in the War of the Roses. It was to secure his boy's claims that the Earl of Cambridge seized on the King's departure to conspire with Lord Scrope and Sir Thomas Grey to proclaim the Earl of March King. The plot however was discovered and the plotters beheaded before the King sailed in August for the Norman coast. His first exploit was the capture of Harfleur. Dysentery made havoc in his ranks during the siege, and it was with a mere handful of men that he resolved to insult the enemy by a daring march like that of Edward upon Calais. The discord however on which he probably reckoned for security vanished before the actual appearance of the invaders in the heart of France; and when his weary and half-starved force succeeded in crossing the Somme it found sixty thousand Frenchmen encamped on the field of Agincourt right across its line of march. Their position, flanked on either side by woods, but with a front so narrow that the dense masses were drawn up thirty men deep, though strong for purposes of defence was ill suited for attack; and the French leaders, warned by the experience of Creçy and Poitiers, resolved to await the English advance. Henry on the other hand had no choice between attack and unconditional surrender. His

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troops were starving, and the way to Calais lay across the French army. But the King's courage rose with the peril. A knight in his train wished that the thousands of stout warriors lying idle that night in England had been standing in his ranks. Henry answered with a burst of scorn. "I would not have a single man more," he replied. "If God give us the victory, it will be plain we owe it to His grace. If not, the fewer we are, the less loss for England." Starving and sick as they were, the handful of men whom he led shared the spirit of their king. As the chill rainy night passed away he drew up his army on the twenty-fifth of October and boldly gave battle. The English archers bared their arms and breasts to give fair play to "the crooked stick and the grey goose wing," but for which—as the rime ran—"England were but a fling," and with a great shout sprang forward to the attack. The sight of their advance roused the fiery pride of the French; the wise resolve of their leaders was forgotten, and the dense mass of men-at-arms plunged heavily forward through miry ground on the English front. But at the first sign of movement Henry had halted his line, and fixing in the ground the sharpened stakes with which each man was furnished his archers poured their fatal arrow flights into the hostile ranks. The carnage was terrible, for though the desperate charges of the French knighthood at last drove the English archers to the neighbouring woods, from the skirt of these woods they were still able to pour their shot into the enemy's flanks, while Henry with the men-at-arms around him flung himself on the French line. In the terrible struggle which followed the King bore off the palm of bravery: he was felled once by a blow from a French mace and the crown of his helmet was cleft by the sword of the Duke of Alençon; but the enemy was at last broken, and the defeat of the main body of the French was followed by the rout of their reserve. The triumph was more complete, as the odds were even greater, than at Crecy. Eleven thousand Frenchmen lay

dead on the field, and more than a hundred princes and great lords were among the fallen.

The immediate result of the battle of Agincourt was small, for the English army was too exhausted for pursuit, and it made its way to Calais only to return to England. Through 1416 the war was limited to a contest for the command of the Channel, till the increasing bitterness of the strife between the Burgundians and Armagnacs and the consent of John of Burgundy to conclude an alliance encouraged Henry to resume his attempt to recover Normandy. Whatever may have been his aim in this enterprize—whether it were, as has been suggested, to provide a refuge for his house, should its power be broken in England, or simply to acquire a command of the seas—the patience and skill with which his object was accomplished raise him high in the rank of military leaders. Disembarking in July 1417 with an army of forty thousand men near the mouth of the Touque, he stormed Caen, received the surrender of Bayeux, reduced Alençon and Falaise, and detaching his brother the Duke of Gloucester in the spring of 1418 to occupy the Côtentin made himself master of Avranches and Domfront. With Lower Normandy wholly in his hands, he advanced upon Evreux, captured Louviers, and seizing Pont de l'Arche, threw his troops across the Seine. The end of these masterly movements was now revealed. Rouen was at this time the largest and wealthiest of the towns of France; its walls were defended by a powerful artillery; Alan Blanchard, a brave and resolute patriot, infused the fire of his own temper into the vast population; and the garrison, already strong, was backed by fifteen thousand citizens in arms. But the genius of Henry was more than equal to the difficulties with which he had to deal. He had secured himself from an attack on his rear by the reduction of Lower Normandy, his earlier occupation of Harfleur severed the town from the sea, and his conquest of Pont de l'Arche cut it off from relief on the side of Paris.

Conquest of Normandy.

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Slowly but steadily the King drew his lines of investment round the doomed city; a flotilla was brought up from Harfleur, a bridge of boats thrown over the Seine above the town, the deep trenches of the besiegers protected by posts, and the desperate sallies of the garrison stubbornly beaten back. For six months Rouen held resolutely out, but famine told fast on the vast throng of country folk who had taken refuge within its walls. Twelve thousand of these were at last thrust out of the city gates, but the cold policy of the conqueror refused them passage, and they perished between the trenches and the walls. In the hour of their agony women gave birth to infants, but even the new-born babes which were drawn up in baskets to receive baptism were lowered again to die on their mothers' breasts. It was little better within the town itself. As winter drew on one-half of the population wasted away. "War," said the terrible King, "has three handmaidens ever waiting on her, Fire, Blood, and Famine, and I have chosen the meekest maid of the three." But his demand of unconditional surrender nerved the citizens to a resolve of despair; they determined to fire the city and fling themselves in a mass on the English lines; and Henry, fearful lest his prize should escape him at the last, was driven to offer terms. Those who rejected a foreign yoke were suffered to leave the city, but his vengeance reserved its victim in Alan Blanchard, and the brave patriot was at Henry's orders put to death in cold blood.

Death of Henry the Fifth.

A few sieges completed the reduction of Normandy. The King's designs were still limited to the acquisition of that province; and pausing in his career of conquest, he strove to win its loyalty by a remission of taxation and a redress of grievances, and to seal its possession by a formal peace with the French Crown. The conferences however which were held for this purpose at Pontoise in 1419 failed through the temporary reconciliation of the French factions, while the length and expense of the war began to rouse remonstrance and discontent at home. The King's diffi-

culties were at their height when the assassination of John of Burgundy at Montereau in the very presence of the Dauphin with whom he had come to hold conference rekindled the fires of civil strife. The whole Burgundian party with the new Duke of Burgundy, Philip the Good, at its head flung itself in a wild thirst for revenge into Henry's hands. The mad King, Charles the Sixth, with his Queen and daughters were in Philip's power; and in his resolve to exclude the Dauphin from the throne the Duke stooped to buy English aid by giving Catharine, the eldest of the French princesses, in marriage to Henry, by conferring on him the Regency during the life of Charles, and recognizing his succession to the crown at that sovereign's death. A treaty which embodied these terms was solemnly ratified by Charles himself in a conference at Troyes in May 1420; and Henry, who in his new capacity of Regent undertook to conquer in the name of his father-in-law the territory held by the Dauphin, reduced the towns of the Upper Seine and at Christmas entered Paris in triumph side by side with the King. The States-General of the realm were solemnly convened to the capital; and strange as the provisions of the Treaty of Troyes must have seemed they were confirmed without a murmur. Henry was formally recognized as the future sovereign of France. A defeat of his brother Clarence at Baugé in Anjou in the spring of 1421 called him back to the war. His re-appearance in the field was marked by the capture of Dreux, and a repulse before Orleans was redeemed in the summer of 1422 by his success in the long and obstinate siege of Meaux. At no time had the fortunes of Henry reached a higher pitch than at the moment when he felt the touch of death. In the month which followed the surrender of Meaux he fell ill at Corbeuil; the rapidity of his disease baffled the skill of the physicians; and at the close of August, with a strangely characteristic regret that he had not lived to achieve the conquest of Jerusalem, the great Conqueror passed away.

CHAPTER VI.

THE WARS OF THE ROSES.

1422—1461.

Plans of Henry V.

AT the moment when death so suddenly stayed his course the greatness of Henry the Fifth had reached its highest point. In England his victories had hushed the last murmurs of disaffection. The death of the Earl of Cambridge, the childhood of his son, removed all danger from the claims of the house of York. The ruin of Lord Cobham, the formal condemnation of Wyclif's doctrines in the Council of Constance, broke the political and the religious strength of Lollardry. Henry had won the Church by his orthodoxy, the nobles by his warlike prowess, the whole people by his revival of the glories of Creçy and Poitiers. In France his cool policy had transformed him from a foreign conqueror into a legal heir to the crown. The King was in his hands, the Queen devoted to his cause, the Duke of Burgundy was his ally, his title of Regent and of successor to the throne rested on the formal recognition of the estates of the realm. Although southern France still clung to the Dauphin, the progress of Henry to the very moment of his death promised a speedy mastery of the whole country. His European position was a commanding one. Lord of the two great western kingdoms, he was linked by close ties of blood with the royal lines of Portugal and Castille; and his restless activity showed itself in his efforts to procure the adoption of his

brother John as her successor by the Queen of Naples and in the marriage of a younger brother, Humphrey, with Jacqueline, the Countess of Holland and Hainault. Dreams of a vaster enterprize filled the soul of the great conqueror himself; he loved to read the story of Godfrey of Bouillon and cherished the hope of a crusade which should beat back the Ottoman and again rescue the Holy Land from heathen hands. Such a crusade might still have saved Constantinople, and averted from Europe the danger which threatened it through the century that followed the fall of the imperial city. Nor was the enterprize a dream in the hands of the cool, practical warrior and ruler of whom a contemporary could say "he transacts all his affairs himself, he considers well before he undertakes them, he never does anything fruitlessly."

John of Bedford

But the hopes of far off conquests found a sudden close in Henry's death. His son, Henry the Sixth of England, was a child of but nine months old: and though he was peacefully recognized as King in his English realm and as heir to the throne in the realm of France his position was a very different one from his father's. The death of King Charles indeed, two months after that of his son-in-law, did little to weaken it; and at first nothing seemed lost. The Dauphin at once proclaimed himself Charles the Seventh of France: but Henry was owned as Sovereign over the whole of the territory which Charles had actually ruled; and the incursions which the partizans of Charles, now reinforced by Lombard soldiers from the Milanese and by four thousand Scots under the Earl of Douglas, made with fresh vigour across the Loire were easily repulsed by Duke John of Bedford, the late King's brother, who had been named in his will Regent of France. In genius for war as in political capacity John was hardly inferior to Henry himself. Drawing closer his alliance with the Duke of Burgundy by marriage with that prince's sister, and holding that of Brittany by a patient diplomacy, he completed the conquest of Northern

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France, secured his communications with Normandy by the capture of Meulan, and made himself master of the line of the Yonne by a victory near Auxerre. In 1424 the Constable of Buchan pushed from the Loire to the very borders of Normandy to arrest his progress, and attacked the English army at Verneuil. But a repulse hardly less disastrous than that of Agincourt left a third of the French knighthood on the field: and the Regent was preparing to cross the Loire for a final struggle with "the King of Bourges" as the English in mockery called Charles the Seventh when his career of victory was broken by troubles at home.

Humphrey of Gloucester.

In England the Lancastrian throne was still too newly established to remain unshaken by the succession of a child of nine months old. Nor was the younger brother of Henry the Fifth, Duke Humphrey of Gloucester, whom the late King's will named as Regent of the realm, a man of the same noble temper as the Duke of Bedford. Intellectually the figure of Humphrey is one of extreme interest, for he is the first Englishman in whom we can trace the faint influence of that revival of knowledge which was to bring about the coming renascence of the western world. Humphrey was not merely a patron of poets and men of letters, of Lydgate and William of Worcester and Abbot Whethamstede of St. Alban's, as his brother and other princes of the day had been, but his patronage seems to have sprung from a genuine interest in learning itself. He was a zealous collector of books and was able to bequeath to the University of Oxford a library of a hundred and thirty volumes. A gift of books indeed was a passport to his favour, and before the title of each volume he possessed the Duke wrote words which expressed his love of them, "moun bien mondain," "my worldly goods!" Lydgate tells us how "notwithstanding his state and dignyte his corage never doth appalle to studie in books of antiquitie." His studies drew him to the revival of classic learning which was becoming a

passion across the Alps. One wandering scholar from Forli, who took the pompous name of Titus Livius and who wrote at his request the biography of Henry the Fifth, Humphrey made his court poet and orator. The Duke probably aided Poggio Bracciolini in his search for classical manuscripts when he visited England in 1420. Leonardo Aretino, one of the scholars who gathered about Cosmo de Medici, dedicated to him a translation of the *Politics* of Aristotle, and when another Italian scholar sent him a fragment of a translation of Plato's *Republic* the Duke wrote to beg him to send the rest. But with its love of learning Humphrey combined the restlessness, the immorality, the selfish, boundless ambition which characterized the age of the Renascence. His life was sullied by sensual excesses, his greed of power shook his nephew's throne. So utterly was he already distrusted that the late King's nomination of him as Regent was set aside by the royal Council and he was suffered only to preside at its deliberations with the nominal title of Protector during Bedford's absence. The real direction of affairs fell into the hands of his uncle, Henry Beaufort, the Bishop of Winchester, a legitimated son of John of Gaunt by his mistress Catharine Swynford.

Jacqueline of Hainault.

Two years of useless opposition disgusted the Duke with this nominal Protectorship, and in 1424 he left the realm to push his fortunes in the Netherlands. Jacqueline, the daughter and heiress of William, Count of Holland and Hainault, had originally wedded John, Duke of Brabant; but after a few years of strife she had procured a divorce from one of the three claimants who now disputed the Papacy, and at the close of Henry the Fifth's reign she had sought shelter in England. At his brother's death the Duke of Gloucester avowed his marriage with her and adopted her claims as his own. To support them in arms however was to alienate Philip of Burgundy, who was already looking forward to the inheritance of his childless nephew, the Duke of Brabant; and as the alliance with Burgundy was the main strength of the English cause in

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France, neither Bedford, who had shown his sense of its value by a marriage with the Duke's sister, nor the English council were likely to support measures which would imperil or weaken it. Such considerations however had little weight with Humphrey; and in October 1424 he set sail for Calais without their knowledge with a body of five thousand men. In a few months he succeeded in restoring Hainault to Jacqueline, and Philip at once grew lukewarm in his adherence to the English cause. Though Bedford's efforts prevented any final break, the Duke withdrew his forces from France to aid John of Brabant in the recovery of Hainault and Holland. Gloucester challenged Philip to decide their claims by single combat. But the enterprize was abandoned as hastily as it had been begun. The Duke of Gloucester was already disgusted with Jacqueline and enamoured of a lady in her suite, Eleanor, the daughter of Lord Cobham; and in the summer of 1425 he suddenly returned with her to England and left his wife to defend herself as she might.

Henry Beaufort.

What really called him back was more than his passion for Eleanor Cobham or the natural versatility of his temper; it was the advance of a rival in England to further power over the realm. This was his uncle, Henry Beaufort, Bishop of Winchester. The bishop had already played a leading political part. He was charged with having spurred Henry the Fifth to the ambitious demands of power which he made during his father's lifetime; he became chancellor on his accession; and at his death the king left him guardian of the person of his boy. He looked on Gloucester's ambition as a danger to his charge, withstood his recognition as Regent, and remained at the head of the Council that reduced his office of Protector to a name. The Duke's absence in Hainault gave fresh strength to his opponent: and the nomination of the Bishop to the Chancellorship marked him out as the virtual ruler of the realm. On the news of this appointment Gloucester

hurried back to accept what he looked on as a challenge to open strife. The Londoners rose in his name to attack Beaufort's palace in Southwark, and at the close of 1425 Bedford had to quit his work in France to appease the strife. In the following year Gloucester laid a formal bill of accusation against the bishop before the Parliament, but its rejection forced him to a show of reconciliation, and Bedford was able to return to France. Hardly was he gone however when the quarrel began anew. Humphrey found a fresh weapon against Beaufort in his acceptance of the dignity of a Cardinal and of a Papal Legate in England; and the jealousy which this step aroused drove the Bishop to withdraw for a while from the Council and to give place to his unscrupulous opponent.

Siege of Orleans.

Beaufort possessed an administrative ability, the loss of which was a heavy blow to the struggling Regent over sea, where Humphrey's restless ambition had already paralyzed Bedford's efforts. Much of his strength rested on his Burgundian ally, and the force of Burgundy was drawn to other quarters. Though Hainault had been easily won back on Gloucester's retreat and Jacqueline taken prisoner, her escape from prison enabled her to hold Holland for three years against the forces of the Duke of Brabant and after his death against those of the Duke of Burgundy to whom he bequeathed his dominions. The political strife in England itself was still more fatal in diverting the supplies of men and money which were needful for a vigorous prosecution of the war. To maintain even the handful of forces left to him Bedford was driven to have recourse to mere forays which did little but increase the general misery. The north of France indeed was being fast reduced to a desert by the bands of marauders which traversed it. The husbandmen fled for refuge to the towns till these in fear of famine shut their gates against them. Then in their despair they threw themselves into the woods and became brigands in their turn. So terrible was the devastation that two hostile bodies of troops failed at one time even to

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find one another in the desolate Beauce. Misery and disease killed a hundred thousand people in Paris alone. At last the cessation of the war in Holland and the temporary lull of strife in England enabled the Regent to take up again his long interrupted advance upon the South. Orleans was the key to the Loire; and its reduction would throw open Bourges where Charles held his court. Bedford's resources indeed were still inadequate for such a siege; and though the arrival of reinforcements from England under the Earl of Salisbury enabled him to invest it in October 1428 with ten thousand men, the fact that so small a force could undertake the siege of such a town as Orleans shows at once the exhaustion of England and the terror which still hung over France. As the siege went on however even these numbers were reduced. A new fit of jealousy on the part of the Duke of Burgundy brought about a recall of his soldiers from the siege, and after their withdrawal only three thousand Englishmen remained in the trenches. But the long series of English victories had so demoralized the French soldiery that in February 1429 a mere detachment of archers under Sir John Fastolfe repulsed a whole army in what was called 'the Battle of the Herrings' from the convoy of provisions which the victors brought in triumph into the camp before Orleans. Though the town swarmed with men-at-arms not a single sally was ventured on through the six months' siege, and Charles the Seventh did nothing for its aid but shut himself up in Chinon and weep helplessly.

Jeanne Darc.

But the success of this handful of besiegers rested wholly on the spell of terror which had been cast over France, and at this moment the appearance of a peasant maiden broke the spell. Jeanne Darc was the child of a labourer of Domremy, a little village in the neighbourhood of Vaucouleurs on the borders of Lorraine and Champagne. Just without the cottage where she was born began the great woods of the Vosges where the children of Domremy drank in poetry and legend from fairy ring and

haunted well, hung their flower garlands on the sacred trees, and sang songs to the "good people" who might not drink of the fountain because of their sins. Jeanne loved the forest; its birds and beasts came lovingly to her at her childish call. But at home men saw nothing in her but "a good girl, simple and pleasant in her ways," spinning and sewing by her mother's side while the other girls went to the fields, tender to the poor and sick, fond of church, and listening to the church-bell with a dreamy passion of delight which never left her. This quiet life was broken by the storm of war as it at last came home to Domremy. As the outcasts and wounded passed by the little village the young peasant girl gave them her bed and nursed them in their sickness. Her whole nature summed itself up in one absorbing passion: she "had pity," to use the phrase for ever on her lip, "on the fair realm of France." As her passion grew she recalled old prophecies that a maid from the Lorraine border should save the land; she saw visions; St. Michael appeared to her in a flood of blinding light, and bade her go to the help of the King and restore to him his realm. "Messire," answered the girl, "I am but a poor maiden; I know not how to ride to the wars, or to lead men-at-arms." The archangel returned to give her courage, and to tell her of "the pity" that there was in heaven for the fair realm of France. The girl wept and longed that the angels who appeared to her would carry her away, but her mission was clear. It was in vain that her father when he heard her purpose swore to drown her ere she should go to the field with men-at-arms. It was in vain that the priest, the wise people of the village, the captain of Vaucouleurs, doubted and refused to aid her. "I must go to the King," persisted the peasant girl, "even if I wear my limbs to the very knees." "I had far rather rest and spin by my mother's side," she pleaded with a touching pathos, "for this is no work of my choosing, but I must go and do it, for my Lord wills it." "And who," they asked, "is your Lord?" "He is God." Words

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such as these touched the rough captain at last: he took Jeanne by the hand and swore to lead her to the King. She reached Chinon in the opening of March, but here too she found hesitation and doubt. The theologians proved from their books that they ought not to believe her. "There is more in God's book than in yours," Jeanne answered simply. At last Charles himself received her in the midst of a throng of nobles and soldiers. "Gentle Dauphin," said the girl, "my name is Jeanne the Maid. The Heavenly King sends me to tell you that you shall be anointed and crowned in the town of Rheims, and you shall be lieutenant of the Heavenly King who is the King of France."

Relief of Orleans.

Orleans had already been driven by famine to offers of surrender when Jeanne appeared in the French court, and a force was gathering under the Count of Dunois at Blois for a final effort at its relief. It was at the head of this force that Jeanne placed herself. The girl was in her eighteenth year, tall, finely formed, with all the vigour and activity of her peasant rearing, able to stay from dawn to nightfall on horseback without meat or drink. As she mounted her charger, clad in white armour from head to foot, with a great white banner studded with fleur-de-lys waving over her head, she seemed "a thing wholly divine, whether to see or hear." The ten thousand men-at-arms who followed her from Blois, rough plunderers whose only prayer was that of La Hire, "Sire Dieu, I pray you to do for La Hire what La Hire would do for you, were you captain-at-arms and he God," left off their oaths and foul living at her word and gathered round the altars on their march. Her shrewd peasant humour helped her to manage the wild soldiery, and her followers laughed over their camp-fires at an old warrior who had been so puzzled by her prohibition of oaths that she suffered him still to swear by his bâton. For in the midst of her enthusiasm her good sense never left her. The people crowded round her as she rode along, praying her to work miracles, and bringing crosses and chaplets to be blest by her touch. "Touch

them yourself," she said to an old Dame Margaret; "your touch will be just as good as mine." But her faith in her mission remained as firm as ever. "The Maid prays and requires you," she wrote to Bedford, "to work no more distraction in France but to come in her company to rescue the Holy Sepulchre from the Turk." "I bring you," she told Dunois when he sallied out of Orleans to meet her after her two days' march from Blois, "I bring you the best aid ever sent to any one, the aid of the King of Heaven." The besiegers looked on overawed as she entered Orleans and, riding round the walls, bade the people shake off their fear of the forts which surrounded them. Her enthusiasm drove the hesitating generals to engage the handful of besiegers, and the enormous disproportion of forces at once made itself felt. Fort after fort was taken till only the strongest remained, and then the council of war resolved to adjourn the attack. "You have taken your counsel," replied Jeanne, "and I take mine." Placing herself at the head of the men-at-arms, she ordered the gates to be thrown open, and led them against the fort. Few as they were, the English fought desperately, and the Maid, who had fallen wounded while endeavouring to scale its walls, was borne into a vineyard, while Dunois sounded the retreat. "Wait a while!" the girl imperiously pleaded, "eat and drink! so soon as my standard touches the wall you shall enter the fort." It touched, and the assailants burst in. On the next day the siege was abandoned, and on the eighth of May the force which had conducted it withdrew in good order to the north.

Coronation of Charles.

In the midst of her triumph Jeanne still remained the pure, tender-hearted peasant girl of the Vosges. Her first visit as she entered Orleans was to the great church, and there, as she knelt at mass, she wept in such a passion of devotion that "all the people wept with her." Her tears burst forth afresh at her first sight of bloodshed and of the corpses strewn over the battle-field. She grew frightened

at her first wound, and only threw off the touch of womanly fear when she heard the signal for retreat. Yet more womanly was the purity with which she passed through the brutal warriors of a mediæval camp. It was her care for her honour that led her to clothe herself in a soldier's dress. She wept hot tears when told of the foul taunts of the English, and called passionately on God to witness her chastity. "Yield thee, yield thee, Glasdale," she cried to the English warrior whose insults had been foulest as he fell wounded at her feet, "you called me harlot! I have great pity on your soul." But all thought of herself was lost in the thought of her mission. It was in vain that the French generals strove to remain on the Loire. Jeanne was resolute to complete her task, and while the English remained panic-stricken around Paris she brought Charles to march upon Rheims, the old crowning-place of the Kings of France. Troyes and Chalons submitted as she reached them, Rheims drove out the English garrison and threw open her gates to the king.

Capture of Jeanne.

With his coronation the Maid felt her errand to be over. "O gentle King, the pleasure of God is done," she cried, as she flung herself at the feet of Charles and asked leave to go home. "Would it were His good will," she pleaded with the Archbishop as he forced her to remain, "that I might go and keep sheep once more with my sisters and my brothers: they would be so glad to see me again!" But the policy of the French Court detained her while the cities of the North of France opened their gates to the newly-consecrated King. Bedford however, who had been left without money or men, had now received reinforcements. Excluded as Cardinal Beaufort had been from the Council by Gloucester's intrigues, he poured his wealth without stint into the exhausted treasury till his loans to the Crown reached the sum of half-a-million; and at this crisis he unscrupulously diverted an army which he had levied at his own cost for a crusade against the Hussites in Bohemia to his nephew's aid. The tide of success turned

again. Charles, after a repulse before the walls of Paris, fell back behind the Loire; while the towns on the Oise submitted anew to the Duke of Burgundy, whose more active aid Bedford had bought by the cession of Champagne. In the struggle against Duke Philip Jeanne fought with her usual bravery but with the fatal consciousness that her mission was at an end, and during the defence of Compiègne in the May of 1430 she fell into the power of the Bastard of Vendôme, to be sold by her captor into the hands of the Duke of Burgundy and by the Duke into the hands of the English. To the English her triumphs were victories of sorcery, and after a year's imprisonment she was brought to trial on a charge of heresy before an ecclesiastical court with the Bishop of Beauvais at its head.

Death of Jeanne.

Throughout the long process which followed every art was used to entangle her in her talk. But the simple shrewdness of the peasant girl foiled the efforts of her judges. "Do you believe," they asked, "that you are in a state of grace?" "If I am not," she replied, "God will put me in it. If I am, God will keep me in it." Her capture, they argued, showed that God had forsaken her. "Since it has pleased God that I should be taken," she answered meekly, "it is for the best." "Will you submit," they demanded at last, "to the judgement of the Church Militant?" "I have come to the King of France," Jeanne replied, "by commission from God and from the Church Triumphant above: to that Church I submit." "I had far rather die," she ended passionately, "than renounce what I have done by my Lord's command." They deprived her of mass. "Our Lord can make me hear it without your aid," she said, weeping. "Do your voices," asked the judges, "forbid you to submit to the Church and the Pope?" "Ah, no! our Lord first served." Sick, and deprived of all religious aid, it was no wonder that as the long trial dragged on and question followed question Jeanne's firmness wavered. On the charge of sorcery and diabolical possession she still appealed firmly

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to God. "I hold to my Judge," she said, as her earthly judges gave sentence against her, "to the King of Heaven and Earth. God has always been my Lord in all that I have done. The devil has never had power over me." It was only with a view to be delivered from the military prison and transferred to the prisons of the Church that she consented to a formal abjuration of heresy. She feared in fact among the soldiery those outrages to her honour, to guard against which she had from the first assumed the dress of a man. In the eyes of the Church her dress was a crime and she abandoned it; but a renewed affront forced her to resume the one safeguard left her, and the return to it was treated as a relapse into heresy which doomed her to death. At the close of May, 1431, a great pile was raised in the market-place of Rouen where her statue stands now. Even the brutal soldiers who snatched the hated "witch" from the hands of the clergy and hurried her to her doom were hushed as she reached the stake. One indeed passed to her a rough cross he had made from a stick he held, and she clasped it to her bosom. As her eyes ranged over the city from the lofty scaffold she was heard to murmur, "Oh Rouen, Rouen, I have great fear lest you suffer for my death." "Yes! my voices were of God!" she suddenly cried as the last moment came; "they have never deceived me!" Soon the flames reached her, the girl's head sank on her breast, there was one cry of "Jesus!" —"We are lost," an English soldier muttered as the crowd broke up; "we have burned a Saint."

Death of Bedford.

The English cause was indeed irretrievably lost. In spite of a pompous coronation of the boy-king Henry at Paris at the close of 1431, Bedford with the cool wisdom of his temper seems to have abandoned from this time all hope of permanently retaining France and to have fallen back on his brother's original plan of securing Normandy. Henry's Court was established for a year at Rouen, a university founded at Caen, and whatever rapine and disorder might be permitted elsewhere, justice, good government,

and security for trade were steadily maintained through the favoured provinces. At home Bedford was resolutely backed by Cardinal Beaufort, whose services to the state as well as his real powers had at last succeeded in outweighing Duke Humphrey's opposition and in restoring him to the head of the royal Council. Beaufort's diplomatic ability was seen in the truces he wrung from Scotland, and in his personal efforts to prevent the impending reconciliation of the Duke of Burgundy with the French King. But the death of the duke's sister, who was the wife of Bedford, severed the last link which bound Philip to the English cause. He pressed for peace: and conferences for this purpose were held at Arras in 1435. Their failure only served him as a pretext for concluding a formal treaty with Charles; and his desertion was followed by a yet more fatal blow to the English cause in the death of Bedford. The loss of the Regent was the signal for the loss of Paris. In the spring of 1436 the city rose suddenly against its English garrison and declared for King Charles. Henry's dominion shrank at once to Normandy and the outlying fortresses of Picardy and Maine. But reduced as they were to a mere handful, and fronted by a whole nation in arms, the English soldiers struggled on with as desperate a bravery as in their days of triumph. Lord Talbot, the most daring of their leaders, forded the Somme with the water up to his chin to relieve Crotoy, and threw his men across the Oise in the face of a French army to relieve Pontoise.

Richard of York.

Bedford found for the moment an able and vigorous successor in the Duke of York. Richard of York was the son of the Earl of Cambridge who had been beheaded by Henry the Fifth; his mother was Anne, the heiress of the Mortimers and of their claim to the English crown as representatives of the third son of Edward the Third, Lionel of Clarence. It was to assert this claim on his son's behalf that the Earl embarked in the fatal plot which cost him his head. But his death left Richard a mere boy

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in the wardship of the Crown, and for years to come all danger from his pretensions were at an end. Nor did the young Duke give any sign of a desire to assert them as he grew to manhood. He appeared content with a lineage and wealth which placed him at the head of the English baronage; for he had inherited from his uncle the Dukedom of York, his wide possessions embraced the estates of the families which united in him, the houses of York, of Clarence, and of Mortimer, and his double descent from Edward the Third, if it did no more, set him near to the Crown. The nobles looked up to him as the head of their order, and his political position recalled that of the Lancastrian Earls at an earlier time. But the position of Richard was as yet that of a faithful servant of the Crown; and as Regent of France he displayed the abilities both of a statesman and of a general. During the brief space of his regency the tide of ill fortune was stemmed; and towns and castles were recovered along the border.

Eleanor Cobham.

His recall after a twelvemonth's success is the first indication of the jealousy which the ruling house felt of triumphs gained by one who might some day assert his claim to the throne. Two years later, in 1440, the Duke was restored to his post, but it was now too late to do more than stand on the defensive, and all York's ability was required to preserve Normandy and Maine. Men and money alike came scantily from England—where the Duke of Gloucester, freed from the check which Bedford had laid on him while he lived, was again stirring against Beaufort and the Council. But his influence had been weakened by a marriage with his mistress, Eleanor Cobham, and in 1441 it was all but destroyed by an incident which paints the temper of the time. The restless love of knowledge which was the one redeeming feature in Duke Humphrey's character drew to him not only scholars but a horde of the astrologers and claimants of magical powers who were the natural product of an age in which

the faith of the Middle Ages was dying out before the double attack of scepticism and heresy. Amongst these was a priest named Roger Bolinbroke. Bolinbroke was seized on a charge of compassing the King's death by sorcery; and the sudden flight of Eleanor Cobham to the sanctuary at Westminster was soon explained by a like accusation. Her judges found that she had made a waxen image of the King and slowly melted it at a fire, a process which was held to account for Henry's growing weakness both of body and mind. The Duchess was doomed to penance for her crime; she was led bareheaded and barefooted in a white penance-sheet through the streets of London, and then thrown into prison for life. Humphrey never rallied from the blow. But his retirement from public affairs was soon followed by that of his rival, Cardinal Beaufort. Age forced Beaufort to withdraw to Winchester; and the Council was from that time swayed mainly by the Earl of Suffolk, William de la Pole, a grandson of the minister of Richard the Second.

The Beauforts.

Few houses had served the Crown more faithfully than that of De la Pole. His father fell at the siege of Harfleur; his brother had been slain at Agincourt; William himself had served and been taken prisoner in the war with France. But as a statesman he was powerless in the hands of the Beauforts, and from this moment the policy of the Beauforts drew England nearer and nearer to the chaos of civil war. John Beaufort, Duke of Somerset, and his brother, Edmund, Earl of Dorset, were now the representatives of this house. They were grandsons of John of Gaunt by his mistress, Catharine Swynford. In later days Catharine became John's wife, and his uncle's influence over Richard at the close of that King's reign was shown in a royal ordinance which legitimated those of his children by her who had been born before marriage. The ordinance was confirmed by an Act of Parliament, which as it passed the Houses was expressed in the widest and most general terms; but before issuing this as a statute Henry the Fourth inserted

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provisions which left the Beauforts illegitimate in blood so far as regarded the inheritance of the crown. Such royal alterations of statutes however had been illegal since the time of Edward the Third; and the Beauforts never recognized the force of this provision. But whether they stood in the line of succession or no, the favour which was shown them alike by Henry the Fifth and his son drew them close to the throne, and the weakness of Henry the Sixth left them at this moment the mainstay of the House of Lancaster. Edmund Beaufort had taken an active part in the French wars, and had distinguished himself by the capture of Harfleur and the relief of Calais. But he was hated for his pride and avarice, and the popular hate grew as he showed his jealousy of the Duke of York. Loyal indeed as Richard had proved himself as yet, the pretensions of his house were the most formidable danger which fronted the throne; and with a weak and imbecile King we can hardly wonder that the Beauforts deemed it madness to leave in the Duke's hands the wide power of a Regent in France and the command of the armies across the sea. In 1444 York was recalled, and his post was taken by Edmund Beaufort himself.

Loss of Normandy.

But the claim which York drew from the house of Mortimer was not his only claim to the crown; as the descendant of Edward the Third's fifth son the crown would naturally devolve upon him on the extinction of the House of Lancaster, and of the direct line of that house Henry the Sixth was the one survivor. It was to check these hopes by continuing the Lancastrian succession that Suffolk in 1445 brought about the marriage of the young King with Margaret, the daughter of Duke René of Anjou. But the marriage had another end. The English ministers were anxious for the close of the war; and in the kinship between Margaret and King Charles of France they saw a chance of bringing it about. A truce was concluded as a prelude to a future peace, and the marriage treaty paved the way for

it by ceding not only Anjou, of which England possessed nothing, but Maine, the bulwark of Normandy, to Duke René. For his part in this negotiation Suffolk was raised to the rank of marquis; but the terms of the treaty and the delays which still averted a final peace gave new strength to the war-party with Gloucester at its head, and troubles were looked for in the Parliament which met at the opening of 1447. The danger was roughly met. Gloucester was arrested as he rode to Parliament on a charge of secret conspiracy; and a few days later he was found dead in his lodging. Suspicions of murder were added to the hatred against Suffolk; and his voluntary submission to an enquiry by the Council into his conduct in the marriage treaty, which was followed by his acquittal of all blame, did little to counteract this. What was yet more fatal to Suffolk was the renewal of the war. In the face of the agitation against it the English ministers had never dared to execute the provisions of the marriage-treaty; and in 1448 Charles the Seventh sent an army to enforce the cession of Le Mans. Its surrender averted the struggle for a moment. But in the spring of 1449 a body of English soldiers from Normandy, mutinous at their want of pay, crossed the border and sacked the rich town of Fougeres in Brittany. Edmund Beaufort, who had now succeeded to the dukedom of Somerset, protested his innocence of this breach of truce, but he either could not or would not make restitution, and the war was renewed. From this moment it was a mere series of French successes. In two months half Normandy was in the hands of Dunois; Rouen rose against her feeble garrison and threw open her gates to Charles; and the defeat at Fourmigny of an English force which was sent to Somerset's aid was a signal for revolt throughout the rest of the provinces. The surrender of Cherbourg in August, 1450, left Henry not a foot of Norman ground.

National discontent.

The loss of Normandy was generally laid to the charge of Somerset. He was charged with a miserly hoarding of

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supplies as well as planning in conjunction with Suffolk the fatal sack of Fougeres. His incapacity as a general added to the resentment at his recall of the Duke of York, a recall which had been marked as a disgrace by the despatch of Richard into an honourable banishment as lieutenant of Ireland. But it was this very recall which proved most helpful to York. Had he remained in France he could hardly have averted the loss of Normandy, though he might have delayed it. As it was the shame of its loss fell upon Somerset, while the general hatred of the Beauforts and the growing contempt of the King whom they ruled expressed itself in a sudden rush of popular favour towards the man whom his disgrace had marked out as the object of their ill-will. From this moment the hopes of a better and a stronger government centred themselves in the Duke of York. The news of the French successes was at once followed by an outbreak of national wrath. Political ballads denounced Suffolk as the ape with his clog that had tied Talbot, the good "dog" who was longing to grip the Frenchmen. When the Bishop of Chichester, who had been sent to pay the sailors at Portsmouth, strove to put off the men with less than their due, they fell on him and slew him. Suffolk was impeached, and only saved from condemnation by submitting himself to the King's mercy. He was sent into exile, but as he crossed the sea he was intercepted by a ship of Kentishmen, beheaded, and his body thrown on the sands at Dover.

Revolt of Kent.

Kent was the centre of the national resentment. It was the great manufacturing district of the day, seething with a busy population, and especially concerned with the French contest through the piracy of the Cinque Ports. Every house along its coast showed some spoil from the wars. Here more than anywhere the loss of the great province whose cliffs could be seen from its shores was felt as a crowning disgrace, and as we shall see from the after complaints of its insurgents political wrongs added their fire to the national shame. Justice was ill administered; taxation was

unequal and extortionate. Redress for such evils would now naturally have been sought from Parliament; but the weakness of the Crown gave the great nobles power to rob the freeholders of their franchise and return the knights of the shire. Nor could redress be looked for from the Court. The murder of Suffolk was the act of Kentishmen, and Suffolk's friends still held control over the royal councils. The one hope of reform lay in arms; and in the summer of 1450, while the last of the Norman fortresses were throwing open their gates, the discontent broke into open revolt. The rising spread from Kent over Surrey and Sussex. Everywhere it was general and organized—a military levy of the yeomen of the three shires. The parishes sent their due contingent of armed men; we know that in many hundreds the constables formally summoned their legal force to war. The insurgents were joined by more than a hundred esquires and gentlemen; and two great landholders of Sussex, the Abbot of Battle and the Prior of Lewes, openly favoured their cause. John Cade, a soldier of some experience in the French wars, took at this crisis the significant name of Mortimer and placed himself at their head. The army, now twenty thousand men strong, marched in the beginning of June on Blackheath. On the advance of the King with an equal force however they determined to lay their complaint before the royal Council and withdraw to their homes. The "Complaint of the Commons of Kent," is of high value in the light which it throws on the condition of the people. Not one of the demands touches on religious reform. The question of villeinage and serfage finds no place in it. In the seventy years which had intervened since the last peasant rising, villeinage had died naturally away before the progress of social change. The Statutes of Apparel, which from this time encumber the Statute-book, show in their anxiety to curtail the dress of the labourer and the farmer the progress of these classes in comfort and wealth; and from the language of the statutes themselves it is plain

that as wages rose both farmer and labourer went on clothing themselves better in spite of sumptuary provisions. With the exception of a demand for the repeal of the Statute of Labourers, the programme of the Commons was not social but political. The "Complaint" calls for administrative and economical reforms; it denounces the exclusion of the Duke of York and other nobles from the royal councils; it calls for a change of ministry, a more careful expenditure of the royal revenue, and for the restoration of freedom of election which had been broken in upon by the interference both of the Crown and the great landowners.

Suppression of the revolt.

The Council refused to receive the "Complaint," and a body of troops under Sir Humphrey Stafford fell on the Kentishmen as they reached Sevenoaks. This attack however was roughly beaten off, and Cade's host turned back to encounter the royal army. But the royal army itself was already calling for justice on the traitors who misled the King; and at the approach of the Kentishmen it broke up in disorder. Its dispersion was followed by Henry's flight to Kenilworth and the entry of the Kentishmen into London, where the execution of Lord Say, the most unpopular of the royal ministers, broke the obstinacy of his colleagues. For three days the peasants entered the city freely, retiring at nightfall to their camp across the river: but on the fifth of July the men of London, goaded by the outrages of the rabble whom their presence roused to plunder, closed the bridge against them, and beat back an attack with great slaughter. The Kentishmen still however lay unbroken in Southwark, while Bishop Waynflete conferred with Cade on behalf of the Council. Their "Complaint" was received, pardons were granted to all who had joined in the rising, and the insurgents dispersed quietly to their homes. Cade had striven in vain to retain them in arms; on their dispersion he formed a new force by throwing open the gaols, and carried off the booty he had won to Rochester. Here however his

men quarrelled over the plunder; his force broke up, and Cade himself was slain by Iden, the Sheriff of Kent, as he fled into Sussex.

Kent remained restless through the year, and a rising in Wiltshire showed the growing and wide-spread trouble of the time. The "Complaint" indeed had only been received to be laid aside. No attempt was made to redress the grievances which it stated or to reform the government. On the contrary the main object of popular hate, the Duke of Somerset, was at once recalled from Normandy to take his place at the head of the royal Council. York on the other hand, whose recall had been pressed in the "Complaint," was looked upon as an open foe. "Strange language" indeed had long before the Kentish rising been uttered about the Duke. Men had threatened that he "should be fetched with many thousands," and the expectation of his coming to reform the government became so general that orders were given to close the western ports against his landing. If we believe the Duke himself, he was forced to move at last by efforts to indict him as a traitor in Ireland itself. Crossing at Michaelmas to Wales in spite of the efforts to arrest him, he gathered four thousand men on his estates and marched upon London. No serious effort was made to prevent his approach to the King; and Henry found himself helpless to resist his demand of a Parliament and of the admission of new councillors to the royal council-board. Parliament met in November, and a bitter strife between York and Somerset ended in the arrest of the latter. A demand which at once followed shows the importance of his fall. Henry the Sixth still remained childless; and Young, a member for Bristol, proposed in the Commons that the Duke of York should be declared heir to the throne. But the blow was averted by repeated prorogations, and Henry's sympathies were shown by the committal of Young to the Tower, by the release of Somerset, and by his promotion to the captaincy of Calais, the most important military post

York and the Beauforts.

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under the Crown. The Commons indeed still remained resolute. When they again met in the summer of 1451 they called for the removal of Somerset and his creatures from the King's presence. But Henry evaded the demand; and the dissolution of the Houses announced the royal resolve to govern in defiance of the national will.

Failure of York

The contest between the Houses and the Crown had cost England her last possessions across the Channel. As York marched upon London Charles closed on the fragment of the duchy of Guienne which still remained to the descendants of Eleanor. In a few months all was won. Bourg and Blaye surrendered in the spring of 1451, Bordeaux in the summer; two months later the loss of Bayonne ended the war in the south. Of all the English possessions in France only Calais remained; and in 1452 Calais was threatened with attack. The news of this crowning danger again called York to the front. On the declaration of Henry's will to resist all change in the government the Duke had retired to his castle of Ludlow, arresting the whispers of his enemies with a solemn protest that he was true liegeman to the King. But after events show that he was planning a more decisive course of action than that which had broken down with the dissolution of the Parliament, and the news of the approaching siege gave ground for taking such a course at once. Somerset had been appointed Captain of Calais, and as his incapacity had lost England Normandy, it would cost her—so England believed—her last fortress in France. It was said indeed that the Duke was negotiating with Burgundy for its surrender. In the spring of 1452 therefore York again marched on London, but this time with a large body of ordnance and an army which the arrival of reinforcements under Lord Cobham and the Earl of Devonshire raised to over twenty thousand men. Eluding the host which gathered round the King and Somerset he passed by the capital, whose gates had been closed by Henry's orders, and entering Kent took post at Dartford. His army was soon

fronted by the superior force of the King, but the interposition of the more moderate lords of the Council averted open conflict. Henry promised that Somerset should be put on his trial on the charges advanced by the Duke, and York on this pledge disbanded his men. But the pledge was at once broken. Somerset remained in power. York found himself practically a prisoner, and only won his release by an oath to refrain from further "routs" or assemblies.

Loss of Guienne.

Two such decisive failures seemed for the time to have utterly broken Richard's power. Weakened as the crown had been by losses abroad, it was clearly strong enough as yet to hold its own against the chief of the baronage. A general amnesty indeed sheltered York's adherents and enabled the Duke himself to retire safely to Ludlow, but for more than a year his rival Somerset wielded without opposition the power Richard had striven to wrest from him. A favourable turn in the progress of the war gave fresh vigour to the Government. The French forces were abruptly called from their march against Calais to the recovery of the south. The towns of Guienne had opened their gates to Charles on his pledge to respect their franchises, but the need of the French treasury was too great to respect the royal word, and heavy taxation turned the hopes of Gascony to its old masters. On the landing of an English force under Talbot, Earl of Shrewsbury, a general revolt restored to the English their possessions on the Garonne. Somerset used this break of better fortune to obtain heavy subsidies from Parliament in 1453; but ere the twenty thousand men whose levy was voted could cross the Channel a terrible blow had again ruined the English cause. In a march to relieve Castillon on the Dordogne Shrewsbury suddenly found himself face to face with the whole French army. His men were mown down by its guns, and the Earl himself left dead on the field. His fall was the signal for a general submission. Town after town again threw open its gates to Charles, and Bordeaux capitulated in October.

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The final loss of Gascony fell upon England at a moment when two events at home changed the whole face of affairs. After eight years of childlessness the King became in October the father of a son. With the birth of this boy the rivalry of York and the Beauforts for the right of succession ceased to be the mainspring of English politics; and the crown seemed again to rise out of the turmoil of warring factions. But with the birth of the son came the madness of the father. Henry the Sixth sank into a state of idiotcy which made his rule impossible, and his ministers were forced to call a great Council of peers to devise means for the government of the realm. York took his seat at this council, and the mood of the nobles was seen in the charges of misgovernment which were at once made against Somerset, and in his committal to the Tower. But Somerset was no longer at the head of the royal party. With the birth of her son the Queen, Margaret of Anjou, came to the front. Her restless despotic temper was quickened to action by the dangers which she saw threatening her boy's heritage of the crown; and the demand to be invested with the full royal power which she made after a vain effort to rouse her husband from his lethargy aimed directly at the exclusion of the Duke of York. The demand however was roughly set aside; the Lords gave permission to York to summon a Parliament as the King's lieutenant; and on the assembly of the Houses in the spring of 1454, as the mental alienation of the King continued, the Lords chose Richard Protector of the Realm. With Somerset in prison little opposition could be made to the Protectorate, and that little was soon put down. But the nation had hardly time to feel the guidance of Richard's steady hand when it was removed. At the opening of 1455 the King recovered his senses, and York's Protectorate came at once to an end.

Madness of the King.

York's revolt.

Henry had no sooner grasped power again than he fell back on his old policy. The Queen became his chief adviser.

The Duke of Somerset was released from the Tower and owned by Henry in formal court as his true and faithful liegeman. York on the other hand was deprived of the government of Calais, and summoned with his friends to a council at Leicester, whose object was to provide for the surety of the King's person. Prominent among these friends were two Earls of the house of Neville. We have seen how great a part the Nevilles played after the accession of the house of Lancaster; it was mainly to their efforts that Henry the Fourth owed the overthrow of the Percies, their rivals in the mastery of the north; and from that moment their wealth and power had been steadily growing. Richard Neville, Earl of Salisbury, was one of the mightiest barons of the realm; but his power was all but equalled by that of his son, a second Richard, who had won the Earldom of Warwick by his marriage with the heiress of the Beauchamps. The marriage of York to Salisbury's sister, Cecily Neville, had bound both the earls to his cause, and under his Protectorate Salisbury had been created Chancellor. But he was stripped of this office on the Duke's fall; and their summons to the council of Leicester was held by the Nevilles to threaten ruin to themselves as to York. The three nobles at once took arms to secure, as they alleged, safe access to the King's person. Henry at the news of their approach mustered two thousand men, and with Somerset, the Earl of Northumberland, and other nobles in his train, advanced to St. Albans.

The civil war.

On the 23rd of May York and the two Earls encamped without the town, and called on Henry "to deliver such as we will accuse, and they to have like as they have deserved and done." The King's reply was as bold as the demand. "Rather than they shall have any lord here with me at this time," he replied, "I shall this day for their sake and in this quarrel myself live and die." A summons to disperse as traitors left York and his fellow nobles no hope but in an attack. At eventide three assaults were made on the

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town. Warwick was the first to break in, and the sound of his trumpets in the streets turned the fight into a rout. Death had answered the prayer which Henry rejected, for the Duke of Somerset with Lord Clifford and the Earl of Northumberland were among the fallen. The King himself fell into the victors' hands. The three lords kneeling before him prayed him to take them for his true liegemen, and then rode by his side in triumph into London, where a parliament was at once summoned which confirmed the acts of the Duke; and on a return of the King's malady again nominated York as Protector. But in the spring of 1456 Henry's recovery again ended the Duke's rule; and for two years the warring parties sullenly watched one another. A temporary reconciliation between them was brought about by the misery of the realm, but an attempt of the Queen to arrest the Nevilles in 1458 caused a fresh outbreak of war. Salisbury defeated Lord Audley in a fight at Bloreheath in Staffordshire, and York with the two Earls raised his standard at Ludlow. But the crown was still stronger than any force of the baronage. The King marched rapidly on the insurgents, and a decisive battle was only averted by the desertion of a part of the Yorkist army and the disbanding of the rest. The Duke himself fled to Ireland, the Earls to Calais, while the Queen, summoning a Parliament at Coventry in November pressed on their attainder. But the check, whatever its cause, had been merely a temporary one. York and Warwick planned a fresh attempt from their secure retreats in Ireland and Calais; and in the midsummer of 1460 the Earls of Salisbury and Warwick, with Richard's son Edward, the young Earl of March, again landed in Kent. Backed by a general rising of the county they entered London amidst the acclamations of its citizens. The royal army was defeated in a hard-fought action at Northampton in July. Margaret fled to Scotland, and Henry was left a prisoner in the hands of the Duke of York.

The position of York as heir presumptive to the crown

by his descent from Edmund of Langley had ceased with the birth of a son to Henry the Sixth: but the victory of Northampton no sooner raised him to the supreme control of affairs than he ventured to assert the far more dangerous claims which he had secretly cherished as the representative of Lionel of Clarence, and to their consciousness of which was owing the hostility of Henry and his Queen. Such a claim was in direct opposition to that power of the two Houses whose growth had been the work of the past hundred years. There was no constitutional ground for any limitation of the right of Parliament to set aside an elder branch in favour of a younger, and in the Parliamentary Act which placed the House of Lancaster on the throne the claim of the House of Mortimer had been deliberately set aside. Possession, too, told against the Yorkist pretensions. To modern minds the best reply to Richard's claim lay in the words used at a later time by Henry himself. "My father was King; his father also was King; I myself have worn the crown forty years from my cradle: you have all sworn fealty to me as your sovereign, and your fathers have done the like to mine. How then can my right be disputed?" Long and undisturbed possession as well as a distinctly legal title by free vote of Parliament was in favour of the House of Lancaster. But the persecution of the Lollards, the interference with elections, the odium of the war, the shame of the long misgovernment, told fatally against the weak and imbecile King whose reign had been a long battle of contending factions. That the misrule had been serious was shown by the attitude of the commercial class. It was the rising of Kent, the great manufacturing district of the realm, which brought about the victory of Northampton. Throughout the struggle which followed London and the great merchant towns were steady for the House of York. Zeal for the Lancastrian cause was found only in Wales, in northern England, and in the south-western shires. It is absurd to suppose that the shrewd traders of Cheapside were moved by an

Richard claims the crown.

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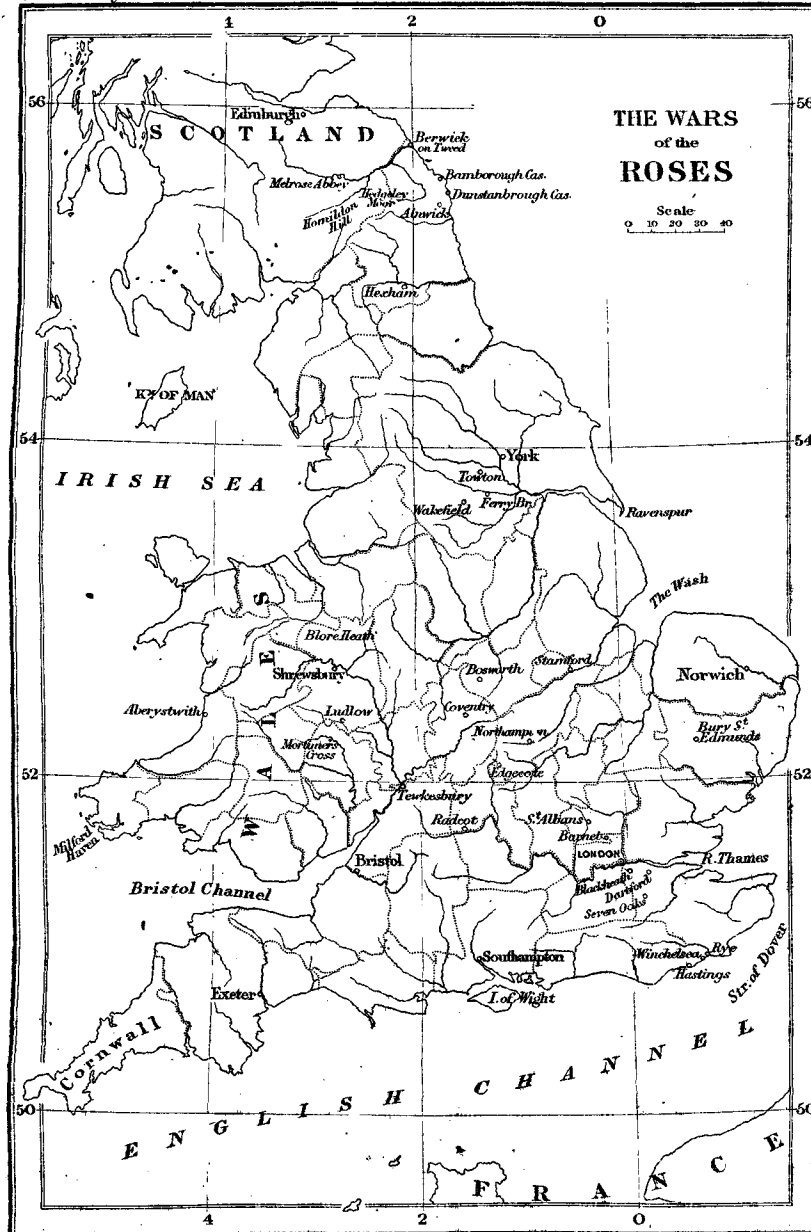
abstract question of hereditary right, or that the wild Welshmen believed themselves to be supporting the right of Parliament to regulate the succession. But it marks the power which Parliament had gained that, directly as his claims ran in the teeth of a succession established by it, the Duke of York felt himself compelled to convene the two Houses in October and to lay his claim before the Lords as a petition of right. Neither oaths nor the numerous Acts which had settled and confirmed the right to the crown in the House of Lancaster could destroy, he pleaded, his hereditary claim. The bulk of the Lords refrained from attendance, and those who were present received the petition with hardly concealed reluctance. They solved the question, as they hoped, by a compromise. They refused to dethrone the King, but they had sworn no fealty to his child, and at Henry's death they agreed to receive the Duke as successor to the crown.

War of the Roses.

But the open display of York's pretensions at once united the partizans of the royal House in a vigorous resistance; and the deadly struggle which received the name of the Wars of the Roses from the white rose which formed the badge of the House of York and the red rose which was the cognizance of the House of Lancaster began in a gathering of the North round Lord Clifford and of the West round Henry, Duke of Somerset, the son of the Duke who had fallen at St. Albans. York, who hurried in December to meet the first with a far inferior force, was defeated and slain at Wakefield. The passion of civil war broke fiercely out on the field. The Earl of Salisbury who had been taken prisoner was hurried to the block. The head of Duke Richard, crowned in mockery with a diadem of paper, is said to have been impaled on the walls of York. His second son, Lord Rutland, fell crying for mercy on his knees before Clifford. But Clifford's father had been the first to fall in the battle of St. Alban's which opened the struggle. "As your father killed mine," cried the savage Baron,



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while he plunged his dagger in the young noble's breast, "I will kill you!" The brutal deed was soon to be avenged. Richard's eldest son, Edward, the Earl of March, was busy gathering a force on the Welsh border in support of his father at the moment when the Duke was defeated and slain. Young as he was Edward showed in this hour of apparent ruin the quickness and vigour of his temper, and routing on his march a body of Lancastrians at Mortimer's Cross struck boldly upon London. It was on London that the Lancastrian army had moved after its victory at Wakefield. A desperate struggle took place at St. Albans where a force of Kentish men with the Earl of Warwick strove to bar its march on the capital, but Warwick's force broke under cover of night and an immediate advance of the conquerors might have decided the contest. Margaret however paused to sully her victory by a series of bloody executions, and the rough northerners who formed the bulk of her army scattered to pillage while Edward, hurrying from the west, appeared before the capital. The citizens rallied at his call, and cries of "Long live King Edward" rang round the handsome young leader as he rode through the streets. A council of Yorkist lords, hastily summoned, resolved that the compromise agreed on in Parliament was at an end and that Henry of Lancaster had forfeited the throne. The final issue however now lay not with Parliament, but with the sword. Disappointed of London, the Lancastrian army fell rapidly back on the North, and Edward hurried as rapidly in pursuit. On the 29th of March, 1461, the two armies encountered one another at Towton Field, near Tadcaster. In the numbers engaged, as well as in the terrible obstinacy of the struggle, no such battle had been seen in England since the fight of Senlac. The two armies together numbered nearly 120,000 men. The day had just broken when the Yorkists advanced through a thick snowfall, and for six hours the battle raged with desperate bravery on either side. At one critical moment Warwick saw his

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men falter, and stabbing his horse before them, swore on the cross of his sword to win or die on the field. The battle was turned at last by the arrival of the Duke of Norfolk with a fresh force from the Eastern Counties, and at noon the Lancastrians gave way. A river in their rear turned the retreat into a rout, and the flight and carnage, for no quarter was given on either side, went on through the night and the morrow. Edward's herald counted more than 20,000 Lancastrian corpses on the field. The losses of the conquerors were hardly less heavy than those of the conquered. But their triumph was complete. The Earl of Northumberland was slain; the Earls of Devonshire and Wiltshire were taken and beheaded; the Duke of Somerset fled into exile. Henry himself with his Queen was forced to fly over the border and to find a refuge in Scotland. The cause of the House of Lancaster was lost; and with the victory of Towton the crown of England passed to Edward of York.

END OF VOL I.

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